**St Martin’s West Acton**

**The War Memorial**

**Short stories of the named men**

**Researched and Written by Clive Davis**

**Section 1 : Very brief notes**

**Section 2: Short biographical notes**

**Section 3: Notes**

**Section 1**

**Hubert Percy Anning**

Parents: Owen and Fanny Anning.

Born: 7th October 1889

Family home 1911: 23 Hale Gardens.

Enlisted 1914 (Hubert working in Kent.)

Died: Sunday 28th November 1915.

Buried in the Pieta Military Cemetery, Malta (Grave: D.X.5)

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**George Edward Austin**

Parents: George and Ellen Austin

Born: January 1895

Family home 1911: 45 Fordhook Avenue

Enlisted into Boy’s Service 1909

Died: Monday 24th July 1916.

Buried in the Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-L’abbe, France (Grave:II.C.5).

Medals awarded: St George (4th class), 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Howard Birch**

Parents: Walter and Emily Birch

Born: 29th May 1896

Family home 1911: 19 Twyford Avenue

Enlisted 1914

Died: Sunday 9th April 1916.

Name inscribed on the Basra Memorial, Iraq (Panel 15).

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**John Birch**

Parents: Walter and Emily Birch

Born: 17th June 1893

Family home 1911: 19 Twyford Avenue

Enlisted 1914

Died: Monday 5th July 1915

Buried in The Twelve Tree Copse Commonwealth War Cemetery, Turkey (Grave: II.C.3).

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Frederick Leonard Butler**

Parents: Joseph and Esther Butler

Born: 10th May 1890

Family home 1911: 58 Sutton Court Road, Chiswick.

Enlisted 1915

Died: Monday 18th September 1916

Name inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial, France (Pier 13C).

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Bernard Champness**

Parents: William and Mary Champness

Born: 1st January 1889

Family home 1911: 27 Whitehall Gardens

Enlisted: 1915

Died: Thursday 27th July 1916

Buried in the Ecoivres Military Cemetery at Mont-St Eloi, France (Grave: III.B.20).

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Edward Randall Chetham-Strode**

Parents: Reginald and Fanny Chetham-Strode

Born: 1891

Family home 1911: 74 Twyford Avenue

Enlisted: August 1914

Died: Monday 1st October 1917

Name inscribed on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium (Panel 85A)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Also awarded a Wound Stripe

**Lionel Theodore Clemence**

Parents: Herbert and Caroline Clemence

Born: 1898

Family home 1911: 66 Twyford Avenue.

Died: Saturday 27th July 1918

Buried at Holy Trinity Church in Penponds (near Camborne), UK.

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**James Alfred Dixon**

Parents: Jesse and Elizabeth Dixon

Born: April 1891

Family home 1911: 73 Twyford Avenue

Family home 1914: 11 Woodgrange Avenue

Enlisted: 1914

Died: Monday 9th August 1915

Buried in the Green Hill Commonwealth War Cemetery, Turkey (Grave: I.C.6)

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Edwin Rowland Watts Draisey**

Parents: Edwin and Annie Draisey

Born: 23rd September1894

Family home 1911: Station House, Lionel Road, Kew Bridge

Enlisted: 1914

Died: Friday 15th September 1916

Name inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial, France (Pier 2C).

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Raymond Stanley Dunford**

Parents: Charles and Elizabeth Dunford

Born: 1896

Family home 1911: 20 Hillcrest Road

Enlisted: 2nd September 1914

Died: Friday 30th November 1917

Buried in the Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel (Grave B.95).

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Bernard Wallace Edwards**

Parents: John and Fanny Edwards

Born: 25th July 1893

Family home 1911: 22 Lynton Road

Enlisted: 1916

Died: Tuesday 14th August 1917

Name inscribed on the Ypres Memorial (Menin Gate), Belgium (Bay 46 Stone E)

Family home in late 1920’s: 27 Creswick Road

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Also Mentioned in Despatches

**Leo Edwards**

Parents: Stephen and Agnes Edwards

Born: July 1889

Family home 1911: 31 Creffield Road

Enlisted: 1914

Died: Thursday 8th June 1916

Name inscribed on the Arras Memorial (Bay 3), in the Faubourg-d'Amiens Cemetery, France.

Family home in late 1920’s: 8 The Common, Ealing.

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Llewelyn Marchant Edwards**

Parents: John and Fanny Edwards

Born: 12th January 1892

Family home 1911: 22 Lynton Road

Enlisted: 1914

Died: Tuesday 21st December 1915

Name inscribed on the Loos Memorial (Panel 132), situated in Duds Corner Cemetery, France

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Family home in late 1920’s 27 Creswick Road

**Robert Nicol Forrester**

Parents: Alexander and Mary Forrester

Born: 1895

Family home 1911: 43 King Edwards Gardens

Enlisted: 1914

Died: Saturday, 1st July 1916

Buried in the Fricourt New Military Cemetery, France (Grave D.2).

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**George Allan Fraser**

Parents: Thomas and Helen Fraser

Born: January 1894

Family home 1911: 4 Denehurst Gardens

Enlisted: 14th February 1916

Died: Tuesday 15th May 1917

Name is recorded on the Arras Memorial (Bay 1) in the Faubourg-d'Amiens Cemetery, France.

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Ernest Alfred Gilbert**

Parents: Richard and Susan Gilbert

Born: 1886 (baptised on 27th June 1886)

Family home 1911: 57 Creffield Road

Enlisted: 29th November 1915

Died: Wednesday, 25th April 1917

Buried in the Chester Farm Cemetery, Belgium (Grave III.F.16)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Family home 1919: 57 Creffield Road

**G Ginger** see below

**John William Ewart Hall**

Parents: John and Annie Hall

Born: 3rd February 1899

Family home 1911: 38 Hillcrest Road

Died: Wednesday 4th September 1918

Buried in the St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France (Grave Q.V.F.8).

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**John Rowland Hill**

Parents: James and Elizabeth Hill

Born: 1890

Family home 1911: ‘Merivale’, Lynton Road

Enlisted: 1915

Died: Saturday, 5th August 1916

Buried in the Sucrerie Military Cemetery, France (Grave: I.F.3).

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Oswald Matthews Holmes**

Parents: Harry and Clara Holmes

Born: 2nd April 1895

Family home 1911: 21 Lynette Avenue, Clapham Common

Enlisted: 1915

Married Margery Holden on 23rd June 1917

Died: Saturday 25th August 1917

Buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium (Grave XVI. A18)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Also awarded a Wound Stripe

Parents’ home in 1920’s: 72 Chatsworth Gardens

**William George Burnet Kettle**

Parents: George and Jessie Kettle

Born: 1887 (baptised on 27th March, 1887)

Family home 1911: 10 Lynton Rd

Enlisted: August 1914

Died: Saturday 1st July 1916

Name inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial, France (Pier 9C)

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Edward Charles Sutton Monson**

Parents: Edward and Marie Monson

Born: 5th June 1898

Family home 1911: 24 Rosemont Road

Died: Saturday 15th June 1918

Buried at the Pernes British Cemetery, France (Grave VB4)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Also awarded the Military Cross

**Edmund Meadows Montgomery**

Parents: Edmund and Elizabeth Montgomery

Born: 1875

Family home 1911: 12 Birch Grove

Died: Thursday 7th March 1918

Buried at the ANZAC Cemetery, Sailly-Sur-La-Lys, France (Grave IIIA4)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Family home in 1920’s: 31 Warwick Road

**Lionel Nicholls**

Parents: George and Louisa Nicholls

Born: October 1896

Family home 1911: 33 Chatsworth Gardens

Enlisted: August 1914

Died: Saturday, 26th August 1916

Buried in the Dranoutre Military Cemetery, Belgium (Grave: II.G.13)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Arthur Bailey Bentick Palmer**

Parents: Arthur and Emily Palmer

Born: 10th September 1890

Family home 1911: 99 The Grove, Ealing

Enlisted: November 1914

Married: Florence Ritson in 1917

Parents’ home 1918: 62 Twyford Ave

Died: Friday 23rd August 1918

Buried in Hanwell (City of Westminster) Cemetery (Grave: E7115) on 27th August 1918

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**George Reginald Dudley Prince**

Parents: George and Grace Prince

Born: 9th December 1890

Family home 1914: 21 Hale Gardens

Married: Lena Woodbine on 14th October 1914

Enlisted: 20th October 1914

Parents’ home 1914: 21 Hale Gardens

Son, Geoffrey, born 9th November 1916 (Their home: 262 Canterbury Road, Gillingham)

Son baptised in St Martin’s Church on 5th January 1917

Died: Sunday 24th November 1918

Buried in the Mikra British Cemetery, Kalamaria, Greece (Grave 924)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Parents’ home in 1922: 20 West Lodge Avenue

Widow’s home post war: 54 Stokenchurch Street, Fulham

**Frederic (Eric) Prockter**

Parents: Frederic and Fanny Prockter

Born: July 1890

Family home 1911: 19 Hale Gardens

Enlisted: 1915

Died: Monday, 2nd October 1916

Body listed as not recovered. Due to have name inscribed on Thievpal Memorial

Body identified in remote grave in 1930’s.

Exhumed on 8th March 1935

Re-interred: in the extension of the London Cemetery, Longueval, France (Grave 4.A.6)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Douglas William Prout**

Parents: William and Jessie Prout

Born: 28th May 1891

Family home 1911: 36 Madeley Road, Ealing

Enlisted: 1915

Died: Sunday, 3rd September 1916

Name is inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial, France (Pier 11D).

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Eric John Cecil Sear**

Parents: Alfred and Emily Sear

Born: July 1893

Family home 1911: 2 Hillcroft Crescent, Ealing

Enlisted: 1914

Died: Friday 8th September 1916

Name inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial, France (Pier 7A & 10A).

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Family home in 1918: 8 West Lodge Avenue

**Claude Hamilton Stainer**

Parents: William and Ada Stainer

Born: April 1885

Family home 1911: 22 Twyford Avenue

Enlisted: 1915

Died: Wednesday 15th November 1916

Name inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial, France (Pier 6A & 6B)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**William Gordon Stainer**

Parents: William and Ada Stainer

Born: 30th September 1881

Family home 1911: 22 Twyford Avenue

Joined Navy: 1901

Died: Thursday, 26th November 1914

Name is inscribed on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial (Panel 1).

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Also awarded the 1911 Coronation Medal

**Ernest Theobald**

Parents: Henry and Sarah Theobald

Born: 8th May 1889

Emigrated: 1910 to Canada, became Canadian Citizen.

Parents’ home 1914: 60 Creffield Road

Enlisted: 19th September 1914 with Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force

Died: Sunday, 1st September 1918

Buried in the Aubigney Communal Cemetery Extension, France (Grave IV.G.46)

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Hugh John Upham**

Parents: Robert and Ellen Upham

Born: 1882

Married Margaret King on 25th November 1905

Enlisted: 12th December 1915

Married home 1915: 42 Waldegrave Road, Hangar Lane

Died: Tuesday 10th July 1917

Buried in the Hop Store Cemetery, Buried (Plot I, Row C, Grave 45).

Medals awarded: British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Parents’ home 1919: 33 Whitehall Gardens

**Harold Victor Wageman**

Parents: Thomas and Caroline Wageman

Born: 14th November 1896

Family home 1911: 48 Chatsworth Gardens

Enlisted: 9th September 1914

Died: Tuesday 10th April 1917

Name inscribed on the Arras Memorial (Bay7) in the Faubourg-d’Amiens Cemetery, France

Also inscribed on the War Memorial at the Territorial Army Drill Hall, Hanworth Road, Hounslow.

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Walter Percy Woodstock**

Parents: Walter and Victoria Woodstock

Born: 27th October 1886

Family home 1911: 11 Hillcrest Road

Enlisted: 1915

Died: Saturday 1st July 1916

Name is inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial, France (Pier 14A & 14B)

Medals awarded: 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

**Section 2**

**Hubert Percy Anning** (7th October 1889 – 28th November 1915)

The son of Owen and Fanny Anning, Hubert was the youngest of three children. The eldest was Sydney (born 1885), followed by Ethel in 1887. The family lived in Brook Green, Hammersmith. Hubert attended Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith. By 1911 the census shows the family had moved to 23 Hale Gardens, Acton. The father was working for the Prudential Assurance Company, with Sydney as an Insurance Official. Hubert Percy, now 21, was an horticultural student. The census was recorded in April 1911. His mother, Fanny, died in June of that year. The July 1911 issue of the parish magazine expresses sadness at their bereavement.

In 1912 Hubert was working near Canterbury as a fruit farmer. In the spring of that year he joined the East Kent Mounted Rifles, also known as the Royal East Kent Yeomanry (Duke of Connaught’s Own Mounted Rifles). Records show that during his first camp, Private Anning (No. 1492) won six prizes, including the Troop Challenge Shield for shooting and the Lloyd Lindsey Prize. At the outbreak of War in August 1914 he volunteered for ‘foreign service’. Hubert was promoted to Sergeant shortly afterwards. In September 1915 his regiment was sent out to the Dardanelles as part of the reinforcements needed there. He was attached to Corps of Hussars (East Kent Yeomanry), then to the Household Cavalry.

In 1915, the campaign in Gallipoli was not going well. By the summer of 1915 more men were needed. The Allies held a bridgehead but couldn’t advance as the Ottoman forces occupied the hills surrounding Suvla Bay. The Sulva front had by now been reduced to trench warfare. Sergeant Hubert Anning had been in the trenches for six weeks when he was taken ill. He was taken by hospital ship to Malta. Hospital records show Hubert was admitted to St George’s Hospital with jaundice which he died from on Sunday 28th November 1915. Sergeant **Hubert Percy Anning** is buried in the Pieta Military Cemetery, Malta (Grave: D.X.5).

Additional headstone inscription requested by his parents:

HE GAVE HIMSELF

His father died in 1935. His brother, Sydney, died in Worthing in 1974. Ethel died in Thurrock, in 1952.



**George Edward Austin** (January 1895 – 24th July 1916)

The son of George and Ellen Austin was two years old when his mother died. There were four children: Reginald (born 1890), Winifred (born 1891), Frank (born 1893), and George. All the children were born in Harlesden. Tragedy struck when in 1897 their mother died. Their father soon found a new mother for his family. He married Emily Bailey on 28th May 1898. They had a son, John (born 1899). By 1901 the new family had moved to 20 Fairlight Avenue, Willesden. Alma (born 1904) was the last child to join the family.

It was in 1909, around 11th November, that George enlisted into the Boy’s Service with the Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry. He was allotted the number 9322. He enlisted in Hounslow. For some reason he did not initially report to the Regimental Depot in Bodmin, where he would have been fully documented, but was posted direct to the 1st Battalion at Gravesend. The Infantry’s Museum therefore do not know his exact date of enlistment, his age, religion or physical statistics. Kings Regulations state that: “Boys of good character between the ages of 14 and 16 may be recruited for the purpose of being trained as trumpeters, drummers, buglers and musicians at the rate of one boy for every 100 rank and file of the establishment!”

By April 1911 the rest of the family were living at 45 Fordhook Avenue. Frank joined the Kings Own Rifle Corps on 5th January 1916, surviving the War.

George would have been made a Private in 1913. By that time the 1st Battalion had moved to the Curragh in Ireland. Mobilization took place on 4th August 1914, and the Battalion embarked at Dublin on 13th August, landing at Le Havre two days later. From that date he appears to have taken part in all the major battles on the Western Front. George was awarded the Medal of St George, 4th class (a Russian decoration). Some records erroneously state he was a awarded the Order of St George. Records held at the National Archives show it was the “Medal” and not the “Order”. The official entry says: *“His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia has been graciously pleased to confer, with the approval of His Majesty the King, the reward for gallantry and distinguished service in the Field.”*

The 5th Division, in which 1st Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry served, did not enter the Somme battlefield till 19th July 1916, relieving the 3rd Division in the area of Delville Wood. On 23rd July, the regiment took part in an abortive attack on High Wood. The following extract, is taken from the Regimental History: *The Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry 1914-1919 by Everard Wyrall*.

The Battles of the Somme:

“23rd July [1916]. The 13th Brigade attacked at 12.30 a.m., but the attack was unsuccessful. At 3.40 a.m. the three companies of D.C.L.I., i.e. A, B and D Companies, assaulted three strong points. They were repulsed with heavy loss. Owing to the failure of the 13th Brigade the flanks of the Cornwalls were open and as they went forward both A and B Companies found themselves in a tight corner and machine-gun-fire caught them in rear and, their flanks being open, they had a terrible time. The remnants of the three companies fell back to their original positions where they hung on all day until relieved on the night of the 23rd by the 1st Divisions. They then returned to the trenches in Happy Valley. Two officers killed, and three officers wounded and a large number of other ranks killed, wounded and missing, were the casualties suffered in the attack of the 23rd July”.

George Austin was fatally wounded in this attack. He died the following day. Private **George Edward Austin** died from his wounds on the Monday 24th July 1916. He is buried in the Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-L’abbe (Grave:II.C.5).

Emily, his step-mother died in 1927, his father died in King Edwards Hospital on 14th December 1929. His elder brother Reginald enlisted with the Australian Army. On 4th August 1917, while on leave, he married Ida Foster at St Saviour’s Church, Ealing. He set up home in Australia after the War. It appears that Alma may have married an American and moved to the USA. By 1929, John was a civil servant and died in 1951. Frank married and they moved to West Yorkshire, he died in 1974.



**Howard Birch** (29th May 1896 – 9th April 1916)

The son of Walter and Emily Birch he was the youngest of two. His elder brother, John, was born in 1893. The family were living in Carshalton. Records show Howard was baptised on 19th July that year. By 1901 the family were living at 18 Cavendish Road, Chorlton cum Hardy, Lancashire. By 1911 the family had moved to 19 Twyford Avenue. Like his brother Howard was educated at Ealing Grammar School, then in Düsseldorf, before enrolling at University College School, Hampstead. Howard left School in 1913.



Although our War Memorial records Howard as serving with the Royal Welch Fusiliers, he enlisted with the Coldstream Guards in September 1914. He obtained his second lieutenancy while in the Coldstream Guards in 1916. Howard was sent to Gallipoli. After evacuation from Gallipoli Howard’s battalion was deployed to Tigris, Mesopotamia - modern day Iraq. In Kut, there were 10,000 British troops besieged by the Turks. The first Battle of Kut was an attempt to relieve these beleaguered troops. The British attacked at dawn on 5th April and were surprised to discover the Turkish first line unoccupied. They regrouped and launched a frontal assault upon Fallahiyeh that same evening. Fallahiyeh was duly taken following an advance across mud-soaked terrain, but at heavy cost. With Fallahiyeh secured, there was a follow-up attack against Sannaiyat. Casualties were high: 2,000 on the first day alone. Attack after attack upon Sannaiyat was repulsed over succeeding days. 1,200 British casualties were incurred alone on 6th April, with additional losses suffered the next day and on 9th April.

On April 9th he was reported “missing, believed killed”. His body was never recovered from the battlefield. His Commanding Officer wrote: “He was a most useful and reliable officer. The Turks still hold the position we attacked and no proper search of the ground has ever been able to be made. The other officers of your son’s company were all either killed or wounded, and I have been able to find none who saw him after the advance commenced.”

Second Lieutenant (12204) **Howard Birch** died on Sunday 9th April 1916. His name is inscribed on the Basra Memorial, Iraq (Panel 15).

His parents retired to 1 Carlton Road, Ealing where his mother died in 1947 and his father in 1953.



**John Birch** (17th June 1893 – 5th July 1915)

The eldest son of Walter and Emily Birch, John had a younger brother (Howard, born 1896). They started life in Stanley Road, Carshalton, Surrey. John was baptised on 16th July 1893. By 1901 the family were living at 18 Cavendish Road, Chorlton cum Hardy, Lancashire. John was a student at Ealing Grammar School, then for a while was educated in Düsseldorf before becoming a student at University College School in Hampstead in 1901. He left U.C.S in 1911 to start work at as a bank clerk. The 1911 census shows the family had moved to 19 Twyford Ave, Acton.

On the outbreak of War John joined the Public School Corps and was promoted to Second Lieutenant in November 1914. He was in the 13th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment (attached to 4th Battalion) when he was sent to the Dardanelles. The campaign in Gallipoli was an attempt to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles. The Allies suffered heavy casualties from the start. By late June Lord Kitchener decided to send reinforcements to the Gallipoli peninsular. A series of attacks were mounted against the Turks. Among these is what has come to be called the Battle of Gully Ravine. This battle started on 28 June 1915. The British Forces would have support from two Indian Brigades and the Artillery. However, due to a shortage of ammunition only 12,000 rounds were allocated for the attack.

The attack went well at first and two lines of Turkish trenches were seized by the British with light losses. Another Brigade, newly-arrived, also reached the Turkish trenches. However, these Forces had no effective artillery support and were thrown back with heavy losses. Determined Turkish counter-strikes progressively restored Turkish control to the trenches seized by the Allies on the Gully Ravine Spur. The Battle of Gully Ravine lasted a week.

Today, nearby, you will find The Twelve Tree Copse Commonwealth War Cemetery. One of those who lay buried there is Second Lieutenant **John Birch** (Grave: II.C.3)**.** Hewas 22 when he lost his life on Monday 5th July 1915. His company commander wrote: “The whole battalion, officers and men of his company, held him in the highest esteem. He was a fine chap and a splendid officer.”

An officer who was with John at the time of his death wrote: “We had left the trenches the day before, and were about two miles behind the firing line in a rest camp. The Turks shelled us from dawn for about three hours, and things had quietened down a bit, and we were standing just outside a ruined cottage, which we used as our mess, waiting for breakfast, when a shrapnel shell burst over us, and your son was shot through the heart by a shrapnel bullet. He became unconscious immediately and died in a few minutes without suffering any pain.”

His parents lost their other son, Howard, a year later. They retired to 1 Carlton Road, Ealing where his mother died in 1947 and his father in 1953.



**Frederick Leonard Butler** (10th May 1890 –18th September 1916)

He was the son of Joseph and Esther Butler. His father was a merchant who often travelled to Morocco, Africa. In 1882 their first son William was born in Chiswick. The family travelled to Morocco and in 1886 Esther Maud and Stella were born in Safi, Morocco. In 1887 the family had returned to Chiswick and Alexandrina was born. They are back in Morocco by 1889 where Eleanor and Frederick was born in 1890. When they returned to England both Eleanor and Frederick were baptised at Gunnersbury Parish Church on 25th July 1890. Scribbled in the margin of the parish’s Baptism Register is “born April 3 1889” beside Eleanor’s entry and “born May 10 1890” beside Frederick’s entry.

By the 5th April 1891, the night of the census, the family were living at Grove House, High Street, Acton. His father died in 1894. The family then move to Chiswick. Stella disappears from all the records. By 1901 Esther Martha with the remaining members of the family are living at 30 Sutton Court Road in Chiswick. In 1904 Esther Maud, now 18, marries William Cooper; they have a son in 1908 and in that same year she is widowed. She returns to the family home in Chiswick.

In 1910 Alexandrina marries Montague Masters and set up home in Surrey. By 1911 the remaining family have moved a few houses along to 58 Sutton Court Road, Chiswick. Esther has moved in with her son (Lionel) and Frederick is recorded as an Articled Surveyor’s Pupil. William marries in 1912; and soon after Eleanor marries Kenneth Bedson, moving to Canada.

The records are unclear when Frederick enlisted. It is likely he enlisted around February 1915. He joined the London Regiment (Queen’s Westminster Rifles). Rifleman Butler (No 1709) was attached to the 16th Battalion. This battalion was sent to the Western Front. They saw action at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette. History records this battle as being the first tank battle. Sir Winston Churchill is quoted as saying “my poor ‘land battleships’ have been let off prematurely on a petty scale”. The 49 tanks that had been built were so few and unreliable they made very little difference to the battle. Due to mechanical problems, only 15 were working on the day of the battle. Their unreliability resulted in the troops having to lead the assault. The battle started on 15th September, but abandoned on 22nd September. During an action on Monday 18th September, 1916, Rifleman **Frederick Leonard Butler** lost his life. He was originally listed as “missing presumed killed” as his body could not be found. Frederick’s name is inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial (Pier 13C).

His mother died in 1942; William, his elder brother died in 1955. His sisters Esther and Alexandrina died in 1952 and 1969 respectively.



**Bernard Champness** (1st January 1889 – 27th July 1916)

The son of William and Mary Champness he was the youngest of three sons. Their first son, William, was born in 1873 with Albert arriving in 1877 and their youngest son, Bernard being born on 1st January 1889. Bernard was baptised at a Wesleyan-Methodist Chapel in Prince of Wales Road on 17th March 1889. They were living at 402 Hornsey Road. In 1891 the family had moved to 347 Edgware Road, Paddington.

On 11th April, 1893 Bernard started school. The Westminster records show that he enrolled at Campbell Street School. There is a note written in the school’s admissions register “Very delicate, certificate from doctor”. By 1901 brother William had married and was living at 128 Brondesbury Road, Willesden and Albert was also married, living at 11 Wheldon Road, Hammersmith. His parents, now retired, were living at 21 Lynton Road with Bernard.

The 1911 census shows that William, Mary and Bernard had moved to 27 Whitehall Gardens, Acton. Bernard was now a Solicitor’s Articled Clerk. Brother William was now living with his wife and son at 94 Twyford Avenue. Albert was living at 23 Whitehall Gardens with his wife (who was to die in 1923, aged 46), two daughters and a son. Bernard was a “Solicitor (Law Society’s Scholar)” when War was declared. He enlisted with the Artist’s Rifles of the London Regiment (no 5575). It seems he enlisted in early 1915. At one point he was recommended for a Commission but owing to the rapidly unfolding events, he was transferred to the Kensington Battalion of the London Regiment. In April 1916, the battalion was deployed to Ireland and after the rebellion they were stationed at Cork, Ballincollig and Macroom on security duty. In May they boarded HMS Snowdon and moved to Fishguard. On 22nd June 1916 the battalion landed at Havre.

The Battles of the Somme had started. Reading the 13th Battalion handwritten diaries kept each day, the entry for 27th July has: “Enemy quiet. Weather fine”. However, I did unearth a typed report from a Major Young of the 13th Battalion in which he wrote: “Kensington men had been sent to other battalions ... Other Territorials were attached to the Kensingtons ... This state of affairs was hardly conducive to esprit de corps, but fortunately the men behaved well”. So it is unclear during which of these battles Bernard was killed. It was possibly either the battle at High Wood or at Delville Wood as both overlapped during July 1916. They are within walking distance of each other.

Private **Bernard Champness** was killed in action on Thursday 27th July 1916. He is buried in the Ecoivres Military Cemetery at Mont-St Eloi (Grave: III.B.20).

Additional headstone inscription requested by his parents:

SON OF W.J. & M.J. CHAMPNESS

OF ACTON

PRO PATRIA

NON TIMIDUS PERIRE

His father died in 1924, his mother in 1934. His brother Albert died in 1955.



**Edward Randall Chetham-Strode** (1891 – 1st October 1917)

He was the eldest son of Reginald and Fanny Chetham-Strode. His father was a New Zealander and his mother, Australian. Edward was baptised at St Andrews, Stoke Newington on June 18th 1891. The family were living at 104 Beltane Road and the baptism records show that the father was a Doctor (GP). His elder sister, Dorothy, was born in 1889. By 1901 the family were living at 231 Royston Park, Pinner. There was now a younger brother, Warren, born in 1896.

The family had moved to 74 Twyford Avenue by 1911. The family was without Edward who was now a “Fruit Farm Student” and living at 12 Harold Terrace, Battle in Sussex. In 1913 Edward visited Australia. His Army Records appear to have been destroyed during the Blitz during the 1940s. The records that survive show he was attached to the Border Regiment (3rd Battalion) as a Second Lieutenant on 15th August 1914. On 8th April 1915 he was promoted to Lieutenant. On the 13th March 1916 Edward was attached to the 2nd Battalion, Border Regiment. Again records are sparse but we know that between April and June he married Adeline Winfield and their married home was 65 Flanders Mansions, Bedford Park.

Around the same time he was promoted to Captain. Hospital records show that Captain E R Chetham-Strode was wounded on 29th June 1916. It was recorded as a Gunshot wound on the face. He was transferred to the No. 20 Ambulance Train on 1st July 1916. The records do not say when he returned to his regiment. In the absence of detailed Army records it is difficult to say how he was killed. At the end of September 1917, the 2nd Battalion of the Border Regiment was moved to the front line trenches. The section of the War Diary for October 1st only says that there was a little activity from Trench Mortars. They sent out “listening patrols”. The Diary doesn’t give any names, but this seems to be the only activity on that day. Records state that Captain **Edward Randall Chetham-Strode** is listed as being killed on Monday 1st October 1917. His body was never found and his name is inscribed on the Tyne Cot Memorial (Panel 85A) in Belgium.

At the time of the Memorial unveiling his parents were living at 60 Wimpole Street, London. His widow had moved to Eastbourne, living at 21 Hyde Gardens. His father had also joined up, and also served in the Border Regiment. He ended the war as Captain (Medical Officer) with the Tank Regiment. He died in 1943. Edward’s mother died in 1946. His sister, Dorothy, died in 1958 and his brother, Warren, died in 1974. His widow, Adeline, died in 1975.



**Lionel Theodore Clemence** (1898 – 27th July 1918)

Researching Lionel Theodore Clemence provided many questions – some still not answered.

He was the son of Herbert and Caroline Clemence. In 1891 it is recorded that his father was living on his own means – not working. They were living at 30 Bath Road, Bedford Park. Lionel’s elder brother was born in 1893. The 1901 census shows that on the day of the census the brothers were at home with their cousin. By April 1911 Lionel and his brother were living with their father, their grandmother and two aunts at 66 Twyford Avenue.

Lionel’s service records seem to be incomplete. On the 3rd February 1917 he was stationed in Dundee and was a Flight Sub Lieutenant with the Royal Naval Air Service. When the RNAS merged with the Army’s Royal Flying Corps in 1918, Lionel was recorded as a Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force. Records show he was “unfit for further service” on 22nd May 1918. Records state he was Gazetted out on 19th July 1918. The Electoral Register gives his address as 6 Beaumont Mansions, West Kensington.

His service records state he died on Saturday 27th July 1918 followed by a note “see file 62435/21”. I have not yet seen a copy of that file. By this time his parents were living in Camborne. Lionel was buried at Holy Trinity Church in Penponds (near Camborne). His gravestone was not one provided by the War Graves Commission. On the original listing of the War Graves Commission Lionel’s grave is not recognised as an official War Grave. A document dated 5th January 1995 contains the following sentence: “The above casualty was not previously recorded by the Commission but has now been accorded war grave status in the above mentioned churchyard.”

So what were the circumstances of Lionel’s death? Perhaps that will remain unknown. In 1921 his brother William became a US citizen. However, he was living in England in 1928 at Beaumont Mansions with his father. In 1930 he married and disappears from all records. It is likely he returned to the US and lived out his life there. Lionel’s father died in 1934 in Putney and his mother who disappeared from their lives before the War died in 1953.



**James Alfred Dixon** (April 1891 – 9th August 1915)

His parents, Jesse and Elizabeth, moved around a lot as Jesse was in the Royal Navy. In 1876 they had a daughter, Ada and were residing in Jersey. There was a mention of a son John who died in 1887. 1878 finds the family in Hong Kong where Frank was born. In 1880 Alan was born and the family home was in Sussex. By 1882 when Mary was born the family was in Ireland. In 1884, while in Ireland, Richard was born. Then the family returned to England. Henry was born in 1888 in Dovercourt, Essex. In 1891 they were living in Argann Villa, Fitzroy Terrace, Stoke Damerel, Devon where our James was born. As he appears on the census taken on 5th April 1891 and is recorded in the April register of births, James was born between 1st and 4th April. His father was now a Staff Commander in the Royal Navy.

By 1901 his father had retired from the Royal Navy and the family home was St Mary’s Lodge, Paington, Devon. Jesse died in 1902 and soon after Richard died in 1905. By 1911 Elizabeth with her sons Frank (now an art student) and Henry (now a motor mechanic) were living at 73 Twyford Avenue. It is unclear where James was at this time. At some time during the next few years the new home was at 11 Woodgrange Avenue. By this time Ada was married to Robert Lawson.

James Alfred Dixon was in the 6th Battalion of the Border Regiment in 1915. The regiment was sent to Turkey. The eight month campaign in Gallipoli was fought by Commonwealth and French forces in an attempt to force Turkey out of the war, to relieve the deadlock of the Western Front in France and Belgium, and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea.

The Allies landed on the peninsula on 25th-26th April 1915 but more troops were needed. On 6th August further troops (including the 6th Border Regiment) were put ashore at Suvla, just north of Anzac, and the climax of the campaign came in early August when simultaneous assaults were launched on all three fronts. The aim of the Suvla force had been to quickly secure the sparsely held high ground surrounding the bay and salt lake, but confused landings and indecision caused fatal delays allowing the Turks to reinforce and only a few of the objectives were taken with difficulty.

The Regimental Diary for the 6th Battalion:

*6th August 1915: Embarked on board destroyer about 5pm and landed at a point just south of Suvla Bay with others from the 11th Division.*

*7th August 1915: At dawn Battalion had not reached the appointed position and* [spent] *day itself behind Lala Baba. Shelled about 6am. 1 killed and 22 wounded. . . . .*

*8th August 1915: Work of consolidating Youghlin Bornu proceeded. About 9am orders were received that we had to withdraw into Reserves again. 53 wounded, 4 killed, 3 missing. About 5pm orders sent from Brigade HQ to go forward and reconnoitre positions to be attacked following morning.*

[Change of handwriting]

*9-8-15: At 1.45am Battn left bivouac accompanied by Lincolns and marched to Yilghlin Burnu reaching positions for deployment at 5am where we were joined by the South Staffs. The advance started about 5am. C & D Companies forming the firing line and supports. A & B were Reserves. . . . The advance proceeded satisfactory until 6.30am reaching near Ismail Uglu Tepe. . . . A & B companies were now pushed into the firing line. A very heavy enfilade fire from enemy machine guns was experienced and the firing line became divided into isolated groups, no support coming up. A further retirement on the left caused the Commanding Officer to collect as many men as he could along the road. This line was held all day until 5pm. At 5pm the remainder of the Battn and one company of the Staffs retired 150 yds and occupied an old trench and dug in. 36 killed, 245 wounded, 132 missing. 716 men had started in the morning with the Battn.*

It was during this operation that James Dixon was killed in action. On the road running between Anzac Cove to Sulva Bay lays the Green Hill Commonwealth War Cemetery where Lieutenant **James Alfred Dixon** (Grave: I.C.6) is buried. He was 24 when he lost his life on Monday 9th August 1915.

Additional headstone inscription requested by his family:

FOR KING AND COUNTRY

THE GREATER LOVE

His mother, Elizabeth died in June 1929. Ada was widowed and remarried in 1940; and died in 1966. Mary was to move to South Africa where she died. Alan joined the Navy, rising to Commander by the time of his retirement and died in 1948. Henry died in 1951 and Frank in 1961.



**Edwin Rowland Watts Draisey** (23rd September1894 – 15th September 1916)

He was the first son of six children born to Edwin (Snr) and Annie Draisey. They set up home in Acton. In 1892 their first child, Annie was born. Edwin Rowland Watts was born on 23rd September 1894, being baptised on 11th November in St Mary’s Church, Acton. Harold (born 1898) and Arthur (born November 1899) followed in quick succession.

1901 finds the family living at 5 Shakespeare Rd, Acton. Edwin Snr was employed as a Railway Booking Clerk. The family continued to grow with Margaret (born 1903) and Audrey (born 1908). By 1911 the family was now complete. They were now living at Station House, Lionel Road, Kew Bridge. Edwin Snr was now the Station Master and the children were at school, apart from the youngest. The family lived there until Edwin’s retirement.

Edwin Rowland Watts joined the University of London Officer Training Corps as a Private in September 1913. The critical shortage of Officers during the South African War (1899-1902) led to the establishment in 1908 of an Officer Training Corps. Initially, the Corps was in 2 Divisions, a junior division in schools and a senior division in universities. Eight universities, including London, formed contingents of the OTC in 1908. The University of London initially consisted of a HQ (Kensington), three infantry sections (University, Kings and East London Colleges), two medical sections (St Bartholomew's and Guy's Hospitals) and an Engineer company (Kensington). During World War I, the OTCs became an Officer-producing corps and some 30,000 Officers passed through. The records of the Bedfordshire Regiment show that on 19th December 1914 Edwin applied for a commission. Early in January 1915 he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant with the 8th Battalion. The Battalion was sent to the Western Front on 30th August 1915. Edwin qualified as a Machine Gun Officer and on 20th December 1915 he was promoted to Lieutenant. On 13th August 1916 he was promoted to Captain in command of A Company.

The Battalion saw action at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette. History records this battle as being the first tank battle. However, the tanks were so few and unreliable they made very little difference to the battle. Indeed Sir Winston Churchill is quoted as saying “my poor ‘land battleships’ have been let off prematurely on a petty scale”. 49 tanks were available for the battle; 17 broke down before reaching the front line and when the battle was launched a further 7 could not be started. The remaining 15 moved so slowly and could be pierced by enemy shells that the Allied commanders were unsure how to use them in a battle. They had no radios so carried Carrier Pigeons and the crew wore chain mail visors to protect themselves against shrapnel. This resulted in the troops having to lead the assault.

Captain Edwin Draisey was one of three officers given the task to lead the first wave of attack. On 15th September 1916 at 4.30am the battalion was in position. At 6.20am intense artillery barrage was opened up to weaken the German defences. The Regiment’s War Diary reads: “Unluckily this intense barrage was cut short where our three companies waited for the attack in shell holes. This mistake caused many casualties. Tanks did not arrive to assist and the German position was not heavily shelled previous to attack. ... Battalion suffered very severely in casualties. We were relieved at 6pm and put into reserve trenches.” The attack was later called off on 22nd September.

Captain Edwin Draisey had led that assault. He was initially posted “missing presumed killed”. On September 29th 1916 **Edwin Rowland Watts Draisey** was posted as “killed in action on [Friday] 15th September”. His body was never recovered from the battlefield. Edwin’s name is inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial (Pier 2C).

His mother died in 1954 and his father in 1959. His eldest sister Annie Elizabeth became a school teacher and passenger lists show that from 1921 she travelled frequently between London and Australia. Her death is not recorded; therefore we can assume she settled in Australia at some point after 1948. Of the other brothers and sisters, Harold died in 1953, Arthur in 1984. Margaret and Audrey never married; Margaret died in 1933 and Audrey in 1969.



**Raymond Stanley Dunford** (1896 – 30th November 1917)

He was the youngest child of Charles and Elizabeth Dunford. In 1896 the family were living at 64 Salham Crescent, Kilburn. Raymond had an elder sister, Lizzie (born 1890). Raymond Stanley Dunford was baptised on 8th November 1896 at St Luke’s Church, West Kilburn. By 1911 they had moved to 20 Hillcrest Road, Acton.

Most of Raymond’s Army Records have survived. He enlisted at Camberwell on 2nd September 1914. His chest measurement is recorded as 33½ inches, increasing by 3 inches when breathing out. Raymond Dunford (no. 650771) was attached to the London Regiment (First Surrey Rifles). The 2nd London formed part of the 60th Division. The Division was assembled at the White City in October 1914, between December 1914 and January 1915, it moved out of London to the Dorking-Reigate area, where it joined Second Army, Central Force. The Division providing strong drafts to its 1st line Division during early 1915, a vigorous recruiting campaign was undertaken to bring the Division back up to strength. In March 1915, the Division moved to the St. Albans area. At the end of May it moved into Hertfordshire and Essex (with Divisional Headquarters at Bishops Stortford). In January 1916 the Regiment was encamped on Salisbury Plain.

His Army Records tell us he was on Home Service until 23rd June 1916 and was appointed Lance Corporal on 9th September 1916. On 24th June 1916 he embarked from Southampton arriving at Le Havre the next day as part of the French Expeditionary Force. The Records for the Surrey Rifles time in France does not seem to have survived. Next we know is that Raymond embarked at Marseilles on 30th November 1916, arriving at Salonika on 8th December 1916. During the night of 24th April 1917, east of Machukovo (now on the Greek-Macedonian border), the Regiment was part of a force that attacked the Bulgarian position which lay west of Lake Dojran. By May 8th the British had some success in what was called the Battle of Dojran. They had secured five hill positions without a single casualty. Following the battle the Regiment was told it would be transferring to Egypt. Some reorganisation was needed which began on June 4th. On June 12th the first part of the Regiment was moved to Egypt.

Raymond was part of Regiment that embarked Salonika on 17th June 1917 disembarking at Alexandria on 19th June as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. By 4th July the troops had all gathered in the Southern Suez Canal area. This Division was now ready to move forward. The move to Deir-el-Balah, 8 miles south-west of Gaza was largely completed by the end of July.

The scene was now set for the third Battle of Gaza. The first two battles had resulted in defeat for the British. Since then the Ottoman Forces had reorganised and increased in numbers. General Allenby organised the Allied Forces into three Corps. On 31st October he attacked the Ottoman Forces at Beersheba. Once this had fallen he turned towards Gaza. In the first few days of November a series of night-time raids captured a number of enemy positions. By the 7th November the Ottoman-Turkish forces retreated towards Jerusalem. The British pursued the Turkish Corps as they retreated to Tel esh Sheria. It was eventually captured and the British now moved towards Jerusalem. By 24th November 1917 the Egyptian Expeditionary Force had reached the outskirts of Jerusalem. There were several counter-attacks by the Ottoman-Turkish Seventh Army over the following days. It was during one of these attacks that **Lance Corporal Raymond Stanley Dunford** was killed on Friday 30th November 1917. Jerusalem was in British hands on 8th December. He is buried in the Jerusalem War Cemetery (Grave B.95).

Additional headstone inscription requested by his parents:

FAITH UNTO DEATH

His sister died in 1946, followed by his mother in 1949. His father died in 1952.



**Bernard Wallace Edwards** (25th July 1893 – 14th August 1917)

He was the third of five children of John and Fanny Edwards. When their first son, William was born in 1888, they were living at 78 St George’s Ave, Tufnell Park, Islington. By 1891 they had moved to Homlea, Faraday Road, Acton. In January 1892 Llewelyn was born, he was killed in action in 1915. By the time Bernard was born on 25thJuly 1893, the family were living at 2 Apsley Terrace, Horn Lane. Bernard was baptised in St Mary’s Church on 28th October 1893. A younger sister, Mildred, was born in 1896 and a younger brother, Harold, was born in 1900. The family was now living at 38 Grafton Road. By 1911 the family were living at 22 Lynton Road, Acton. By now their eldest son, William was in India – he was a police officer and married Mary Helm in Bombay, Feb 22nd 1915. Bernard was a “Boy Clerk” in the Civil Service – in the India Office of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Bernard enlisted with the Royal Sussex Regiment for training in 1916. On 5th August records show that Cadet B W Edwards was transferred to the Rifle Brigade and as 2nd Lieutenant. The London Gazette records that on 18th November 1916 he became Lieutenant, and on 24th January 1917 Bernard was promoted to Captain. Bernard was also “Mentioned in Despatches”. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find the documentation which would give the details. During the Great War the London Gazette was not allowed to report the place and date of the action when the citations were awarded. This was because of “security reasons”. The documents with the details were kept by the War Office. Many of these documents were destroyed in the London Blitz of World War II.

The War Diary which described the action in which Bernard was killed reads:

*“Aug 14: Attack on Steenbeek. Intention – to cross the Steenbeek and occupy the ground East of the stream to a depth of approximately 200 yards.*

*By 3am the Battalion was formed up for attack . . . 250 yards west of and parallel to the Steenbeek. At 3am “B” company took up its position for attack. All this time the enemy sent over a large number of gas shells which fell near Battalion Headquarters at Stray Farm.*

*At 4am the attack commenced. The enemy immediately opened up with fairly heavy machine gun fire. Considerable difficulty was experienced in crossing the Steenbeek as the bridges carried by our assaulting troops were found to be too short and the men had to ford the stream. Casualties from shell and machine gun fire were unfortunately very heavy especially of those of our right who were met by intense machine gun fire. Gallant efforts were made to force the strongly fortified blockhouse which had not been damaged by our shell fire. . . . All efforts to dislodge them [*the Germans*] were useless. Our left companies were slightly better off, although they suffered considerably from sniping and machine gun fire.*

*By 6am consolidation was in progress. Unfortunately all the Company Commanders had become casualties and two companies had no officers at all. The remainder of the day and night was spent in consolidation, which was chiefly in improving shell holes. Enemy sniping was severe.*

*Among Officers the following were killed: [*the officers were listed, including*] Capt B W Edwards.”*

Captain **Bernard Wallace Edwards** was killed in action on Tuesday 14th August 1917. His body was never recovered from the battlefield and his name is recorded on the Ypres Memorial (Menin Gate), Bay 46 Stone E. By the time the Memorial was unveiled the family were living at 27 Creswick Road, Acton.

His sister Mildred died in 1974, and brother Harold in 1980.



**Leo Edwards** (July 1889 – 8th June 1916)

He was the youngest of two sons born to Stephen and Agnes Edwards. They most likely met and married in South America. This assumption is because there are no records of either of them between 1871 and 1891. In 1871 they were both single and in 1891 they were living in Christchurch, Hampshire with two sons. Their eldest son, William, was born in Chile in 1886, while their second son, Leo, was born in July 1889 in Redruth, Cornwall. Stephen was a Civil and Mechanical Engineer and for a while worked at a Tin Mine. By 1891 the family was living at Montrose Villa, Christchurch Road, Christchurch, Hampshire. They had moved to 17 Lyndhurst Gardens, Ealing by 1901, moving to 31 Creffield Road by 1911. The father had now retired and William was now a bank clerk with Leo a Clerk in an Accountants office.

Leo Edwards enlisted with the Honourable Artillery Company in 1914. They were sent to France on 18th August 1916 and Leo was transferred to the Norfolk Regiment on 29th January 1916. It is while he was serving with the Norfolk Regiment that he was promoted to Second Lieutenant. Records show that his battalion was deployed to the Western Front. Hand written War Diaries were kept by many regiments. The entry in the 1st Battalion Norfolk Regiment Diary for June 4th 1916 reads:

*“10.30am: Enemy started bombardment of our trenches. Trenches 93 and 94 became untenable and men had to be moved to trench 92.*

*3pm – 5pm: Artillery bombardment along the front.*

*9.17pm: Enemy exploded three enormous mines along our front and immediately attacked. The direction of the enemy attack was along the Arras Bailleul road. ‘C’ Company on the right and ‘D’ Company in the centre immediately opened fire on the enemy. The RFA* [Royal Field Artillery] *shelled in front of our line where the mine craters were with shrapnel. A few of the enemy managed to enter our obstacle line, some started to bomb a disused trench. ..... By now enemy reached our firing line. The enemy alarmed at their reception soon fled leaving behind a considerable amount of bombs and other material.*

*10pm: All was quiet on our line. Posts were set up on the lips of the new craters. Lieuts G P Burlton,* ***L Edwards*** *and L J Row were missing.*

*21 killed, 25 wounded, 10 missing.”*

Leo’s body was not recovered from the battlefield. The death of Lieutenant **Leo Edwards** is recorded as Thursday, June 8th 1916. His name is inscribed on the Arras Memorial (Bay 3) which is situated in the Faubourg-d'Amiens Cemetery, France. By the time the Arras Memorial was unveiled the family had moved to 8 The Common, Ealing.

His father died in 1927, his mother in 1937 and his brother in 1957.



**Llewelyn Marchant Edwards** (12th January 1892 – 21st December 1915)

He was the second of five children born to John and Fanny Edwards. When their first son, William was born in 1888, they were living at 78 St George’s Ave, Tufnell Park, Islington. By 1891 they had moved to Homlea, Faraday Road, Acton. On 12th January 1892 Llewelyn Marchant Edwards was born, being baptised on 9th April that same year in St Mary’s Church Acton. Bernard was born in 1894 (also killed in action later during the war), Mildred in 1896 and Harold in 1900. By 1901 the family was living at 6 Grafton Road, Acton. 1911 saw the family living at 22 Lynton Road, Acton. By now their eldest son, William Cecil was in India – he was a police officer and married Mary Helm in Bombay, 1915. Llewelyn and Bernard were “Boy Clerks” in the Civil Service.

Llewelyn Marchant Edwards (no. 2170) enlisted with the London Regiment (Prince of Wales’ Own Civil Service Rifles). He probably enlisted in September 1914. His military service has been a difficult to research. One army record states Llewelyn “died” in December 1915. However no major battle is recorded for his unit in that month. Searching the hospital records that have been available to me, there is no record of him being admitted as a casualty. The Soldiers Effects Register records killed in action on 21st December 1915. I have not been able to find copies of any regimental diary. He must have been killed in action as Army records give the place of his death as being ‘The Western Front’. He has no known grave so he most likely died during an action between large battles but it is hard to be certain which battles. As his name is inscribed on a memorial wall in Loos he was either killed in the weeks following the battle of Loos or in the weeks following action at the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

Lance Corporal **Llewelyn Marchant Edwards** died on Tuesday 21st December 1915, aged 24. He has no known grave and his name is inscribed on the Loos Memorial (Panel 132) which forms the sides and back of the Duds Corner Cemetery. Dud Corner Cemetery stands almost on the site of a German strong point, the Lens Road Redoubt. The name "Dud Corner" is believed to be due to the large number of unexploded shells found in the neighbourhood after the Armistice. By the time the Loos Memorial was unveiled the family were living at 27 Creswick Road, Acton.

Mildred died in 1974 and Harold in 1980.



**Robert Nicol Forrester** (1895 – 1st July 1916)

He was the third of five children born to Alexander and Mary Forrester. They were living at 68 Earl Street, Gorton, Manchester when their first child, Mary, was born in October 1891. By 1893 they were living in Fulham where Christina (born 1893) and Robert Nicol was born (in 1895). In 1900 twin girls (Alexina and Dorothy) were born. By 1901 they were living in Burnfield Villa, Rothschild Road, Acton. The twins both died in the summer of 1901. By 1911, the family had moved to 43 King Edwards Gardens, Acton. Robert, aged 15, was employed as an accountant’s clerk. Robert’s father, Alexander, died in June 1916. Robert’s sister, Mary, married Alfred Garratt on 16th April 1919 at St Mary’s Church, Acton.

When war was declared, Robert enlisted with the West Yorkshire Regiment (10th Battalion). In 1915 they were deployed to the Somme and Robert had attained the rank of Corporal. The Regiment was in the area of Fricourt Village. The Battalion War Diary records that on 28th June they were in trenches moving to battle positions on the 30th. The entry for 1st July was short and reads: “*At 7.30am the Battalion took part in the grand assault. Orders attached. The Battalion assaulted in 4 lines. 2 lines got through the German position and were cut off, the attack on our left failed. Casualties were very heavy chiefly caused by machine guns which enfiladed our left flank and were so deadly that our 3rd and 4th lines failed to get across no-man’s-land. Approximately 27 officers and 750 other ranks were killed.*”

The “Orders attached” gave the objectives of the assault. There was a village just within the German front line, Fricourt Village. The Orders were: “*Objective:* *Clearing up to the Eastern edge of Fricourt Village from Well Lane to Cottage and from Cottage to Willow Avenue. On reaching this objective the battalion will reorganize with objective of clearing Fricourt Wood.”* The first objective wasn’t met until the next day by another battalion. The remainder of the 10th Battalion was rested until they received replacements from reserves. The first day of what become known as the Battle of the Somme, 1st July, saw over 60,000 British casualties.

Corporal **Robert Nicol Forrester**, aged 21, was killed in action on Saturday, 1st July 1916. He is buried in the Fricourt New Military Cemetery (Grave D.2).

Additional headstone inscription requested his relatives:

BELOVED AND ONLY SON OF

ALEXANDER AND MARY FORRESTER

Mary, his sister, died in 1973.



**George Allan Fraser** (January 1894; d.15th May 1917)

He was the fifth of six children born toThomas and Helen Fraser. He was the fifth of six children. Mary (born 1881), Isabella (born 1883), Thomas jnr (born 1885) and Nellie (born 1891) were his elder siblings and Margaret (born 1897) was his younger sister. The family started their married life in Hammersmith. By 1891 they were living at 2a Brackenbury Road, moving to 206 Goldhawk Road by 1901. The father was a gardener and florist, employing his children – the girls working in the shop.

By April 1911, the family had moved to 4 Denehurst Gardens. George was employed as a gardener. The two middle girls were working in the shop as florists. Isabella was to marry later that year. George’s elder brother disappears from the records. It seems he moved to South Africa. George’s younger sister dies in 1923. Isabella continued to live in 4 Denehurst Gardens with her husband and later inherited the house. The photograph of George was taken in 1915.

Army Records show that George enlisted with the Honourable Artillery Company on 14th February 1916. He was attached to the Reserves and the London Gazette records that Cadet George Fraser became Second Lieutenant on 25th January 1917. He remained in the Reserve Battalion until 18th April. George was transferred to the 2nd Battalion HAC on 8th May. The Honourable Artillery Company’s own records record his death as being 15th May 1917. A note in the margin simply records “Bullecourt”.

In fact the battle at Bullecourt ended on 15th May and it is most likely that he was killed a few days earlier, but there was no possibility of searching for bodies until the battle had ceased. His body was never found.

There were two battles at Bullecourt – one in April and the last in May 1917. Neither was a great success. They were almost exclusively fought by the Australians. The first battle at Bullecourt was doomed to failure from the beginning. The infantry was supposed to be supported by tanks, but only eleven were available when the battle started. The Australian infantry met heavy German machine gun fire and their losses were huge, losing over 2,200 men on the first day alone. The losses were so significant that the battle was halted and a new assault was planned involving British soldiers supporting the Australians. The second battle started on May 3rd. Both Australians and British casualties were described as severe. It deteriorated into two weeks of to and fro. The second battle was supported by artillery fire. Within two weeks the village of Bullecourt was no more. On May 15th the battle was over, all action had ceased and only 400 yards had been gained.

The body of Second Lieutenant **George Fraser** was never recovered and the Army records give the date of his death as Tuesday, May 15th 1917. His name is recorded on the Arras Memorial (Bay 1).

His father died in 1931 (in Chalfont). His sister, Margaret, died in 1923; Nellie died in 1962; Isabella in 1964 and Mary died in 1970.



**Ernest Alfred Gilbert** (1886 – 25th April 1917)

He was the second of three boys born to Richard and Susan Gilbert. Ernest was baptised on 27th June 1886 in St Philip’s Church, Kensington. His elder brother Richard junior was born in 1880. They were living at 8 St Philips Terrace, Kensington. By 1891 the family had moved to 13 Sugden Road in Battersea. Ernest’s younger brother, Montague was born in 1890. By April 1911 the family had moved to 57 Creffield Road, Acton. By this time Ernest was a shipbroker and his father had retired.

Army Attestations forms show that Ernest enlisted on 29th November 1915. He was 5 feet 9 inches tall, with a chest measurement of 35 inches. He was sent to France on 21st April 1916, embarking from Southampton and arriving at Rouen on 22nd April. He was killed on 25th April 1917. As there was very little information of that date in the War Diary for the London Regiment (Artist’s Rifles), how did he die? There is a page in Ernest’s Army record which simply says:

“*Killed in the field (whilst undergoing Course of Instruction)*”.

**Ernest Alfred Gilbert** was killed on Wednesday, 25th April 1017 and was buried in the Chester Farm Cemetery, Belgium (Grave III.F.16)

The records show the effects returned to his next of kin were: Letters, Photos, Pocket Case, Religious Medallion, Wrist Watch, Metal Watch, Gold Ring, Cap Badge, Torch, Pipe in Case, Fountain Pen and Metal Mirror. From the records we know that in 1919 his parents were still living in 57 Creffield Road, His elder brother, Richard, was living in Ipswich and the younger brother, Montague, was living in Hammersmith. His father died in 1920, and is mother in 1921. When the medals were being distributed, in May 1923, letters show that Montague had to submit his father’s Will to show that his brother’s medals could be sent to him. Montague at this time was living in Leyland Road, Lee. The letter says:

“ *... regarding medals awarded to your late gallant brother, Pte E A Gilbert, I beg to state that, as these medals were the property of the late Mr R Gilbert, they follow his estate. I should be obliged therefore, if you would kindly forward the Probate of Will, for registration and early return, as this document now forms the authority for the release of the Medals.*”

Montague, the younger brother, died in 1949; and the elder brother, Richard, married in 1920 and died in 1954.



**G Ginger**

The War Memorial says: G Ginger Middlesex Regiment.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission has no record of a G Ginger from the Middlesex Regiment as being a casualty. They have no grave or memorial recorded for him.

They have two from the Middlesex Regiment named “Sidney Ginger”. Neither seems to have a connection with Acton. The nearest they have is a G Ginger from the Bedfordshire Regiment, transferred to the Hertfordshire Regiment. The address of the next of kin is Welwyn, Herts. I am currently looking at any female siblings of those three to see if they (after marriage) were living in the Parish.



**John William Ewart Hall** (3rd February 1899 – 4th September 1918)

John William Ewart Hall was born on 3rd February 1899. He was the only child of John and Annie Hall. John W was baptised in St Thomas’ Church, Hammersmith on April 3rd, 1899. By 1901 the census shows the family were living at 57 Hillcrest Road, Acton. John senior was a teacher of handicraft with the London County Council. The 1911 census shows that the family had moved a few doors down to 38 Hillcrest Road where the family remained for many years.

There are few records for John William. Army records record that he was originally with the Suffolk Regiment (Private 51261). At some point he was transferred to the 10th Battalion of the Essex Regiment (Private 44329). Due to the lack of surviving records it is hard to know what action he saw and how he died. The War Diary of the 10th battalion of the Essex Regiment has survived.

 *“2nd Sept [1918] The battn commenced to move up to assembly points at 2am. The battn had formed up by 3.30am under very adverse conditions as enemy shelled forming up positions during the assembly. Zero hour was at 5.30am. The attack was successful. Great difficulty was experienced in keeping direction through the [St Martins] Wood, the undergrowth was very high. Concealed shell holes also caused considerable trouble. After the objective was taken the positions were heavily shelled.”*

The War Diary continues to describe that on 3rd September the objective was to secure bridges across the Canal du Nord. However, this action failed due to heavy enemy artillery fire.

I could not find the hospital records to know on which day he sustained his injuries. We know he was taken to the Field Hospital near Rouen. Records simply state that John William Ewart Hall died from his wounds on Wednesday 4th September 1918. He is buried in the St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen (Grave Q.V.F.8).

By 1939 his mother had moved to 76 Duncombe Road, Hertford. Probate states she died in June 1961 leaving £5,388 to the Westminster Bank Ltd.



**John Rowland Hill** (1890 – 5th August 1916)

His father James married a widow, Elizabeth, who had three children from her previous marriage. The children were Harold Sidney Cumming (born 1875) and Adeline Cumming (born 1878). They were living at 43 Falkland Road at the time of their marriage in St John the Baptist Church, Kentish Town. Elizabeth’s first husband died in 1882, they had been married 9 years.

John Rowland was born in 1890. By April 1891 the family was living at 35 Dalmeny Road, Islington. In 1893 their youngest daughter, Lilian, was born. The family were still living at the same address in 1901. The family’s move to 145 Lynton Road took place within the next few years as the 1911 census records ‘Merivale’, Lynton Road as their residence. James was now the Stock Keeper, Harold now a Commercial Traveller. Adeline, John and Lilian were “Music Students”.

John Rowland joined the King’s Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (13th Battalion). He had enlisted by May 1915. From this point his military service is unclear. At some point he was promoted to Second Lieutenant. I have been unable to determine in which battles he saw action. The 13th Battalion was a Reserve unit. These Reserve units were used to relieve Service units when they became exhausted. The 13th Battalion therefore saw action in parts of many of the battles that occurred along the Somme. It is most likely that John Hill lost his life during one of the actions around Delville Wood, though I have not been able to confirm this. The battle of Delville Wood began in late July and continued until September 1916. During this time there were many attacks on the enemy in that area and just as many counter attacks. Many lives were lost on both sides.

On Saturday, 5th August 1916 that Second Lieutenant **John Rowland Hill** was killed in action, aged 26. He is buried in the Sucrerie Military Cemetery near Colincamps, France (Grave: I.F.3).

His mother died in 1920, his father in 1932. Harold died in 1953 and Adeline in 1956. Lilian often called herself by her middle name, Alice. It was as Alice that she signed the marriage register when she married William Heaton in 1920.



**Oswald Matthews Holmes** (2nd April 1895 – 25th August 1917)

He was eldest of three children born to Harry and Clara Holmes. They were originally from Yorkshire but didn’t seem to settle very long in one place. So in 1895 they were in Bristol when Oswald was born on 2nd April. They went back to Yorkshire to baptise him in June that same year. Oswald was to have two sisters, Constance (born in 1898) and Marjorie (born in 1905). The 1901 census shows the family were living at 19 Klondike Road, Streatham. Records show that Oswald was educated at Balham Modern School. By 1911 the family had moved to 21 Lynette Avenue, Clapham Common. Oswald was an “evening student” while working as a clerk with Charles Morgan Stationers during the day.

Oswald joined the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps on 2nd Aug 1915 and Commissioned at 2nd Lieutenant on 1st November that year in the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. Records show he trained at Ripon passing as a vet, then sent to Pontefract as a Transport Officer. He was sent to France in June 1916 and took part in two battles during the Somme offensive. On 15th September that year he was admitted to No.34 Casualty Clearing Station after being wounded in a gas attack. He was transferred to No.6 Hospital Train the next day. He was awarded a “wound stripe”. The wound stripe was a strip of "gold Russia braid” to be sewn on the left sleeve to indicate that the soldier had been gassed or suffered from shell shock. He was sent back to England on sick leave.

While on sick leave he married Margery Holden in Leeds on 23rd June 1917. He re-joined his regiment in France on 27th June. August 1917 began with the regiment in training in Belgium, being moved into position on August 22nd. The War Diary takes up the story:

*“Aug 22 7am Sanctuary Wood. The 6th KOYLI remained in the woods and dug themselves in under very heavy fire.*

*11am Orders received to reinforce the front line.*

*2.15pm Relieved by 2 Cpys of RRRC.*

*Aug 23 2.30am Moved up to Inverness Copse. A runner was sent with urgent message. The runner was killed and apparently nothing happened until 11.30am. The rest of the day spent consolidating.*

*9pm Enemy put down heavy bombardment which lasted until 5am next day.”*

During the action Oswald was wounded and taken to No.17 Casualty Clearing Station where he died two days later, on Saturday 25th August 1917. The Hospital Chaplain wrote to his parents: *“Your son came in on the evening of 25 Aug and died at 11.20pm that night of wounds in the shoulder, body and hand. He had acute gas gangrene and nothing could be done for him. He suffered very little owing to weakness. He was too weak to speak or understand much.”*

Capt Hettler wrote: “*My Commanding Officer has asked me to write to you and give what details I can about the death of your son, 2nd Lieut O M Holmes. It is a most painful duty to perform for by the loss of 2nd Lieut Holmes I miss a real good helper and officer, one who was most conscientious in the performance of his duties, most thorough in all he undertook, and a real friend to the men under his command. I knew his value as an officer; as an only son I can conceive the greatness of the loss you have sustained. On the morning of Wednesday 22 Aug we went into action, your son commanding one of the platoons of my company. He was quite all right until Thursday morning at 11 o’clock when he was hit by a fragment of shell on the left hip. He was promptly attended to by the stretcher-bearers who dressed his wound, then carried him to a place of safety, ready to be despatched to hospital. I saw him in the afternoon and he seemed rather cheerful for one in his condition, and I really believed that he would pull through all right. However, news came through that he died in the evening of the 25th.”*

**Oswald Matthews Holmes** died on Saturday, 25th August 1917 and is buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Grave XVI. A18. By the time the cemetery had been laid out and the headstones put in place his wife of a few months had remarried. She was now Mrs Verinder and living in Lee.

She requested the following additional inscription to be added:

AND HE WAS NOT

FOR GOD TOOK HIM

GEN. 5. 24

His parents were now living at 72 Chatsworth Gardens. His father died in 1949 and his mother in 1953. His widow died in 1980.



**William George Burnet Kettle** (1887 – 1st July 1916)

He was the eldest of four children born to George and Jessie Kettle. The census of 1911 states that William was born in Port Elizabeth, Cape Colony, which is now part of South Africa, in “about 1888”. However, I found a baptism record which indicates he was christened on 27th March, 1887 in the parish church of Barbourne, Worcester. His parents were from Middlesex. It is unclear when they moved to Cape Colony but they lived in Port Elizabeth during the Boer War. William had a sister, Constance (born 1890) and a brother Rupert (born 1899) also supposedly born in the Cape Colony. His youngest brother, Denis, was born in Acton in 1908. The 1911 census describes William’s father as a retired merchant. It is likely that the family returned to Britain when the Boer War ended in 1902. The 1911 census records the family lived at 10 Lynton Rd, Acton. William enlisted in August 1914, joining the London Regiment (Queen Victoria’s Rifles). Rupert joined the East Kent Regiment (Buffs) later and survived the War.

The early summer of 1916 found William on the Western Front. The Regiment’s War Diary shows that from 16th June 1916 they were preparing for battles. The diary goes on:

*“ June 23 to June 26. Attack practices. Trench digging. Fatigues.*

*June 27. Battalion marched from Halloy to billets at St Amand.*

*June 28 to June 30. Battalion in Reserve.”*

The next seven pages list the battle orders. The battle orders show that six phases were planned. It lists the Advance Formation, the objectives for each company in the battalion, which groups would carry Lewis guns and which would be stretcher bearers. The Orders described which signallers would be stationed at each point, even down to signposting junctions of the German trenches as they were taken so British soldiers would know the directions they would be going in. It then lists the colour armbands each unit would be wearing for identification. For example, those appointed as wire cutters would be wearing white armbands, whereas signallers would wear blue & white armbands. The Orders were quite detailed, down to making sure the “Battle Police” knew where to send each company as they occupied German trenches and to see that any “stragglers” were sent to their companies. There is even a list of the equipment each section would carry. For example “Group A” would carry 35 large wire-cutters, 15 small wire-cutters, 90 wire breakers, 10 billhooks, 140 vigilant periscopes, 3 box periscopes, 500 sandbags, 360 grenades, 40 shovels and 10 picks. All this had to be carried across no man’s land and under fire.

The attack would start when smoke was fired. So the men knew which direction they should advance in the smoke, lines of “chloride of lime” would be laid in No Man’s Land. In the last week of June the Allies started an artillery bombardment on the German defences in the area. The bombardment lasted seven days. The plan was that with German defences destroyed the Allied armies could advance with light resistance and gain ground quickly. The first day of the advance was scheduled for July 1st. On this day thirteen divisions launched an offensive. Huge resources of manpower were deployed. Unfortunately the preliminary seven-day bombardment barely touched the German defences. The Allied forces were surprised by the fierce resistance they met and losses were later described as catastrophic. The Battle of the Somme ended in November when winter intervened.

The entry in the Queen Victoria’s Rifles’ War Diary reads:

*“July 1 (St Amand) Hebuterne. Battalon left billets in St Amand 8pm – 9.3pm on June 30 and took up position in assembly trenches, Y sector.*

*7.20am Smoke began (5 minutes too early).*

*7.30am Assault commenced. As soon as the assault commenced the German barrage was opened on to our trenches. It increased in intensity. By 9.48am the assaulting companies reached their objectives. However, they did not get in touch with the battalion on the right. At the same time the third company was consolidating the German 2nd line. The Germans pressed hard and the shortage of bombs was being felt.*

*According to the plans battle police were ordered to join the companies at 9.30am. Owing to congestion and communications they did not leave the trenches until after 10.30am. When they were able to leave the trenches they came under heavy machine gun fire and half the party immediately became casualties.*

*11am Shortage of [*mortar*] bombs was critical.*

*12.30pm German counter attacks increased and our companies were driven back.*

*4.30pm Battalion ordered to hold.*

*7pm All survivors left in German trenches were now driven out and those who could get across no man’s land rejoined the battalion.*

*Killed 56, Wounded 295, Missing 193.”*

**William Kettle**, aged 18, was killed on Saturday, July 1st 1916. His body was never recovered from the battlefield and his name is inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial (Pier 9C).

His mother died in 1937, his father in 1938. Constance went to live in South Africa in 1939, later returning to Britain and lived in Devon until her death in 1979. The youngest of the family, Denis, moved to Devon where he died in 1994.



**Edward Charles Sutton Monson** (5th June 1898 – 15th June 1918)

Edward Charles Sutton Monson is probably the most “well-known” of the 36 names on our War Memorial due to the plaque dedicated to his memory on the wall at the back of the church. His grandfather (Edward Monson) was the architect of the church and his father (Major Edward C P Monson) was an important member of the congregation.

Our Edward was born on 5th June 1898. He was the eldest of four children born to Edward and Marie Monson. His brother John was born in 1910, sister Eilleen in 1903 and Enid in 1913. His parents were married in St Dunstan’s Church, East Acton. They soon moved to Rosemont Road which was then part of St Mary’s Parish. The 1901 census records their address as 24 Rosemont Road. That was to remain the family home but our Edward and his brother were sent away to school. The 1911 census has them both as boarders at Broadhurst Grammar School at Clacton-on-Sea.

Records of Edward’s Army career have been difficult to find. He joined the Royal Field Artillery and in February 1918 was promoted to Lieutenant. At some point he was awarded the Military Cross. During the Great War, the authorities would not allow the London Gazette to print details of any action where the Military Cross was awarded in case it was seen by the enemy. Unfortunately many of the original records showing the details of who and when the Military Cross was awarded were destroyed during the London Blitz of the Second World War.

I can only quote the London Gazette of 13th September 1918 (issue 30901):

*His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to approve the following Award to the undermentioned, in recognition of their gallantry and devotion to duty in the Field.*

*Awarded the Military Cross. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. This officer volunteered for special service, he and another officer at dawn taking two guns in front of the infantry line without escort and engaging the enemy, bringing back the limbers for more ammunition, and using it up. This action checked the enemy advance and afforded time for the withdrawal of the infantry.*

Although it could have been for a previous act of bravery, it seems to me that this action for which he was awarded the MC was where he was fatally wounded. This is implied in the inscription on the plaque at the back of the church. **Edward Charles Sutton Monson** died of wounds on Saturday, 15th June 1918. He is buried at the Pernes British Cemetery, grave VB4.

His parents requested for the additional inscription:

UNTIL THE REVEILLE

WHEN ALL SHALL BE REUNITED

Passenger lists show that his mother and sister Eilleen travelled to France on 11th March 1927, returning on 31st March. I would think they visited Edward’s grave soon after the Cemetery officially opened.

His father, Edward, died in the Osborne Hotel, Torquay in January 1941. His mother died in 1972. His brother, John, died in 1989. His sister, Enid was a Wren during the Second World War. Towards the end of that War she served in Singapore where she met a former prisoner of war, Richard Gilbert. They married in 1946 and she died in 1993. His other sister Eilleen was Confirmed at St Martin’s Church in 1920. She married Francis Coningsby in 1929 and died in 1998.



**Edmund Meadows Montgomery** (1875 – 7th March 1918)

He was the fifth of seven children born to Edmund and Elizabeth Montgomery. They lived in Ealing and Acton throughout their married life. Edmund junior was born in 1875 and the family were living at 3 Bonchurch Villa, The Grove, Ealing. He had four elder siblings: Ethel (born 1867), Clarence (born 1869), Arthur (born 1873) and Winifred (born 1874). Following Edmund came Hugh (born 1879) and Martha (born 1880). The 1891 census shows the family had moved to 32 The Grove. Edmund’s father was now a Registrar at the Indian Railway Company and his brother, Clarence, after spending three months in the Rifle Brigade in 1888 was now an Assistant Master in Corsham School.

By 1901 Edmund was working as a clerk with the Indian Railway Company. 1905 saw the marriage of his brother Arthur who first lived in Shalimar Gardens. Arthur and his wife were to have two children. The census of April 1911 shows the Montgomery family now living at 12 Birch Grove. All but Edmund and sisters Ethel and Winifred had moved away. Winifred was now a Head Teacher and Ethel a teacher of domestic subjects. His brother Clarence had married and was living in South Africa, returning in 1913. Hugh had married in 1909 and was now living in Richmond. Martha married in 1910 and set up home in Birkbeck Avenue.

Little is known of Edmund’s military service. He served with the 6th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). The War Diaries do not contain very much detail for March 1918. It tells us that each night the “No mans” land was patrolled by one officer and 9 “other ranks”. March 5th was recorded as having mild weather. During the night of March 7th (at 12.15am) a small enemy patrol attempted to raid the trenches. It doesn’t name casualties. However, it must have been during this skirmish that Edmund was killed. The Army records simply state that he was killed in action on Thursday March 7th.

Private **Edmund Montgomery** (aged 42) was buried at the ANZAC Cemetery, Sailly-Sur-La-Lys, France (Grave IIIA4). This cemetery was used for Front Line burials.

Soon after the War ended Edmund’s parents moved to 31 Warwick Road. His mother died in 1922 and his father in 1925. His sisters Ethel and Winifred moved to Webster Gardens, Ealing after their parents died. They never married and lived as two spinsters until their deaths. Winifred died in 1943 and Ethel in 1949.

In 1919 his brother, Clarence, and family moved to South Africa. They returned in 1923 and lived in St Austell, Cornwall. He died in 1952. By 1939 Arthur and his family had moved to 36 Twyford Avenue, later moving to 2 Twyford Crescent where he died in 1949. Hugh and his family had moved to Ferring in Sussex and he died in 1966. Martha and her family moved to Woodbridge, Suffolk where she died in 1969.



**Lionel Nicholls** (October 1896 – 26th August 1916)

He was the second of three children born to George and Louisa. They started their married life at 4 Burns Road, Willesden. Their first-born, Elsie, was born in 1892; Lionel followed in 1896 and Doris in 1899. By April 1901 they were living at 142 Lancaster Road, Kensington. By 1911 they had moved to 33 Chatsworth Gardens.

Lionel is mentioned in the Parish magazine of July 1911. The Vicar, Rev’d Charles Serjeant wrote: “*Our young people who were confirmed last March have very kindly presented me with a little offering in the shape of a Smoker’s Cabinet. I suppose they think that, like Sherlock Holmes, a good many new ideas will come to me through the clouds of smoke issuing from the cigar taken from the cabinet drawer. At any rate, if new ideas do not come, I shall get a good deal of comfort and satisfaction out of their kind present and I thank them very heartily for not only the offering but the kind thought that prompted the offering. I also wish to thank Master Lionel Nicholls for the presentation which was made in a true English boy style, left at the house without word or comment. It could not have been better.”*

Lionel enlisted in August 1914 when War was declared and joined the London Regiment. At one point he was attached to the 9th Battalion (Queen Victoria’s Rifles) where he became Lance Corporal. However, it was while he was in the 8th Battalion (Post Office Rifles) that Lionel was promoted to Second Lieutenant. From this point his military service is unclear. I have been unable to determine in which battles he saw action. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission has Lionel listed under the Post Office Rifles, but the Army War Diary for the Post Office Rifles (8th Battalion London Regiment) state:

“*August 24: marched to billets at Franvillers.*

*August 25-30: Battalion remained in billets at Franvillers. Casualties for the month: Nil”*

It seems that he must have been attached to another Battalion in August when he was killed in action. I assume Lionel may have lost his life in battles somewhere along the Somme only to be buried in Dranoutre. The Military Cemetery was used by the Field Ambulances for burials. Second Lieutenant **Lionel Nicholls** was killed in action on Saturday, 26th August 1916. He is buried in the Dranoutre Military Cemetery, Belgium (Grave: II.G.13).

Additional headstone inscription requested by his parents:

GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN

HE GAVE HIS LIFE

FOR HIS FRIEND

His father died in 1923. Elsie married John Grandfield in October 1916 at St Mary’s Church, Acton. John ended the war as an Army Captain. In 1959 they both retired to Canada, sailing to Quebec.



**Arthur Bailey Bentick Palmer** (10th September 1890 – 23rd August 1918)

He was the third of four children born to Arthur (senior) and Emily Palmer. Clarence was born in 1884 and Beryl in 1888; followed by Arthur on 10th September 1890 in Calcutta, India. His father was working for the Indian Government Telegraph Department. Our Arthur was baptised on 11th January 1891 in St Bartholomew’s Church, Barrackspore. By 1896 the family had moved to England and it was here that Arthur’s younger sister, Stella was born. The census of 1901 shows they were living at 99 The Grove, Ealing. In 1909 his sister Beryl married Lionel Purdey in St Mary’s Ealing. The remainder of the family were still living at The Grove when War broke out.

Records show that our Arthur started work in September 1911 at 19 Gracechurch Street, London. It was recorded as being the “London Office”. He continued to work there until November 1914, when he enlisted into the Army. His younger sister, Stella, married Maurice Deacon in 1914. She died in 1916. Here there is a difference in records. When the Commonwealth War Graves Commission compiled their list of war graves they included ‘additional information’ supplied by the next of kin. The additional information for Arthur says he was born in Ealing, which records show otherwise, and that Arthur served in the Middlesex Regiment (Artists Rifles) which records show as inaccurate.

Army records show that Arthur was in the 17th Battalion Middlesex Regiment (1st Football). In April 1915 he was at Chelsea Barracks on a signalling course. The London Gazette records that he was promoted to Lieutenant on 27th July 1915. Army records show he was at Camberley in August 1915 on a Staff College Course. Soon afterward he was transferred to the Royal Flying Corp. The Army records have an intriguing hand written note:

“Since joining the RFC: Missing Officers Course at Port Slade.” The reason for this is not given.

The next entry in his records simply state that Arthur had an “Aero Accident at home [England]” on 21st December 1916. He was with the 35th Training Depot Squadron. The records continue:

“11.1.17 Unfit for any Service for 3 weeks

9.2.17 Unfit GS [General Service] 4 months, HS [Home Service] 3 months, LD [Light Duty] 3 weeks

22.3.17 LD in open air, no flying

20.4.17 Fit GS”

In the early Summer of 1917 Arthur married Florence Ritson. He was to call her Kitty. The Army records continue:

“17.9.17 Unfit GS 3 months, HS 2 months, LD 6 weeks

31.12 17 Unfit GS 3 months, Fit HS

2.4.18 Unfit GS. Fit HS only”

At this time the couple were living at Nobby Cottage, Downham Market, Norfolk. He is listed as being a pilot. On the 22nd August 1918 he was flying a two-seater biplane. It is not clear which type, but it was either registered “RE A4598” or “C4598”, according to a note on the records. We do know that he was flying with Lt E Carpenter on that fateful day when the plane crashed. They were both immediately taken to the Thetford Military Hospital. Arthur died of his injuries on Friday 23rd August 1918 and Lt Carpenter died the following day. On Tuesday 27th August 1918 **Arthur Bailey Bentick Palmer** was a buried in Hanwell (City of Westminster) Cemetery. His grave is E7115.

By the early 1920s Arthur’s parents were living 62 Twyford Ave. His father died in October 1931 and his mother died in November 1931. His brother Clarence served in the Royal Navy during the Great War and married a “Yugo-Slav” girl soon after. He lived in Sarajevo where he died in May 1936. His sister, Beryl, died in Axminster, Devon in 1964. I couldn’t follow Arthur’s wife, Kitty, with certainty.



**George Reginald Dudley Prince** (9th December 1890 – 24th November 1918)

He was the eldest of two and only son of George and Grace Prince. Our George was born on 9th December 1890 in Balham. Our George was baptised in St Mary’s Church, Balham on 4th May, 1891. The family were living in Bedford Hill Road. His sister, Ivy, was born in 1892. George was educated at Streatham Hill College between 1900 and 1906. By 1901 the family home was 24 Tierney Road, Streatham. While at Streatham Hill College, George passed the Cambridge Local, the College of Preceptors and the South Kensington Science Examinations. In October 1906 he entered the City and Guilds Technical College at Finsbury, studying electrical and mechanical engineering. George gained Certificates in Electrical Engineering (1908) and Mechanical Engineering (1909). He left College with a Diploma of Associate of the College. In 1908 he won a Prize in Mathematics which was presented to him at the Mansion House.

George became an Apprentice with Callender’s Cable & Construction Company in 1909. He spent two years at their Works in Erith, Kent. While working in Kent he lodged at 84 Bexley Road North, Belvedere, Kent. When he finished his Apprenticeship in 1911 George was appointed a Draughtsman within the Company at Erith. In September 1912 he started work with Henley’s Telegraph Works Company. He worked at their Gravesend Works as an Assistant Electrical Engineer.

By 1914 his parents and sister were living at 21 Hale Gardens. 1914 was an important year for George. In the autumn he left Henley’s to join up and he married Lena Woodbine on October 14th 1914 in Gravesend. On 20th October George was commissioned in the Royal Engineers (Territorial Force) as Second Lieutenant. He was attached to the Headquarters of the Kent (Fortress) Engineers in Gillingham, near Chatham.

He was assigned duties on the Searchlights defending the Thames and Medway. In January 1915 he was attached to the No.5 Electric Light Company of the Kent Engineers, being stationed at Gravesend. On 28th May 1915 he was promoted to Lieutenant and transferred to No.4 Electric Light Company serving on the Isle of Grain and at Sheerness. Promotion to Temporary Captain followed on 6th July 1915 when he was appointed Staff Officer to the Chief Engineer, Thames and Medway Garrison, being stationed at Chatham for two years. During this time, on 1st June 1916, he became an Associate Member of the Institute of Electrical Engineers.

In 1916 George and Lena became parents. Geoffrey Dudley Prince was born on 9th November. Their home was 262 Canterbury Road, Gillingham. However, they chose to have Geoffrey baptised in St Martin’s Church on 5th January 1917.

On 7th October 1917 he relinquished his Temporary Captain and was sent to Carnarvon, Wales for a course on pontoon and heavy bridging; returning to Chatham on January 4th 1918. Subsequently he was attached to the Salonika Force which sailed to Macedonia on 9th May. On arrival he was attached to the 33rd Base Park, Royal Engineers. On 12th September he was transferred to the XII Corps Searchlight Company, Royal Engineers. He was placed in command of a Detachment of this Company and took part in the Dorian Offensive. As the British troops advanced, George and his Detachment were left behind. According to later family recollections his Detachment was no longer near the new lines of communications and was left with no transport and only “iron rations”. What is not in question is that the weather became hot and this resulted in cases of malaria and Spanish Influenza.

On October 5th his Searchlight Detachment was ordered to Janes. For reasons unknown – perhaps due to lack of transport – George remained where he was for at least a fortnight. Again, through family recollections, it was due to the privations that he now fell ill with malaria. Eventually, his Detachment made their way to Janes where he could receive medical attention. George was sent to the Base hospital at Salonika. Due to his weak condition he succumbed to Spanish Influenza whilst at the hospital. He was due to be placed on a Hospital Ship and to be sent back to the UK. Unfortunately, before embarkation, **Lt George Reginald Dudley Prince** died on Sunday 24th November 1918. He was buried in the Mikra British Cemetery, Kalamaria (Grave 924). His parents and widow paid for the following subscription on his headstone:

WE LOVED HIM IN LIFE

IN DEATH WE FORGET NOT

GOD LOVED HIM TOO

AND CALLED HIM HOME

A fellow Officer of George wrote the following to his father: “*My old friend, your son, was a most promising and excellent officer. . . . He never spared himself to do a fellow a good turn.*”

His parents and sister were still living in 21 Hale Gardens in 1919. By 1922 they had moved 20 West Lodge Avenue. His mother died in 1933 and his father in 1944. His sister never married and died in Worthing in 1972. Lena, his widow never remarried and after the war moved to 54 Stokenchurch Street, Fulham (with their son) where she lived until her death in 1958. In 1939 records show that his son, Geoffrey, worked as a carpenter. During World War II he also served in the Royal Engineers where he reached the rank of Lance Corporal. He was also “Mentioned in Despatches”. He married Joan Hardcastle in 1948, setting up home in Southall. He died on 8th September 1981.



**Frederic (Eric) Prockter** (July 1890 – 2nd October 1916)

He was the eldest of two children of Frederic and Fanny Prockter. By 1890 they had returned and were living at 15 Withington Rd, Moss-side Township, Manchester. The Manchester Rate Books show they rented from a John Brookes. It was while they lived in Manchester that their children, Frederic (born 1890) and Kate (born 1892) were born. They lived there until 1900. They moved to 12 Birch Grove, Acton. The 1901 census describes Frederic Senior as a Hardware Warehouse Manager. (Perhaps this was with Poores of Acton?) By 1911 the family moved to 19 Hale Gardens. Frederic Junior was now employed as a Clerk at the Hardware Warehouse.

When Frederic (Eric) enlisted, in early 1915, he was attached to the 7th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment. The Battalion saw action on the Western Front. In October 1916 they were deployed on the Transloy Ridges. Capturing the Ridges was part of a grand plan to “straighten out” the trench line along the Somme. Although attacks along the ridges started in September, it was on the 1st October the battle along the entire ridge started. The weather was bad. There had been a lot of rain during September but as the battle started the weather worsened. At 3.15pm on October 1st a seven-hour bombardment of the German lines started. Despite this, the German resistance was described as being fierce and the atrocious weather resulted in a delay with the follow-up attack. There were heavy casualties.

One of those killed in action was Lieutenant **Frederic Prockter**. Records state he was killed on Monday, 2nd October, though some Army records give 3rd October. The truth is that bodies could not be recovered immediately. When the regiment was able to look for casualties his body was not identified. In the midst of battles the dead are buried when there is time for burials. At the time he was posted as “missing presumed killed”. Nearby, an “Unknown British Soldier” was buried at a place recorded as “Les Boeufs: 59c.N.34.b55.80”.

After the Armistice, the decision was made to set up Cemeteries and Memorials. Frederic’s name was included on the list of those to be inscribed on the Thievpal Memorial to those “who have no known grave”. At this time his parents were still living in 19 Hale Gardens as the Army Medal letter and medals were sent there in 1921. In the 1930’s the War Graves Commission took the decision to find all the isolated graves and rebury the remains in an extension to the “London Cemetery” in Longueval. The cemetery contained 101 burials in 1918. It was extended in order to bring together all the isolated graves from the area. This cemetery became the third largest containing around 7,000 burials.

As many of the soldier’s “identity tags” were made of card, rather than metal, medical and other records were needed to identify some bodies. When the authorities exhumed a body on 8th March 1935, at the isolated grave in “Les Boeufs” they made a detailed record of the body. The description includes:

*Officer’s tunic with Middlesex collar badges and regimental buttons.*

*Height: 5’10”*

*Effects: Gloves marked 7Mx FP Boots: size 9*

The dental records show in the upper mouth 12 teeth were intact and 4 had been stopped; the lower mouth had 9 teeth intact, 5 stopped and 2 back teeth were “just growing”. With all this information the authorities were able now to identify the body as being that of Frederic (Eric) Prockter. Frederic was reburied in the extension of the London Cemetery, Longueval in Grave 4.A.6. By 1935 his parents had retired to 60 Browning Avenue, Boscombe.



**Douglas William Prout** (28th May 1891 – 3rd September 1916)

He was the youngest of four children born to William and Jessie Prout. Their first child, John, was born in 1878. Their second son, Edward Archibald followed in 1880. By 1881 the family were living at 37 Priory Road, Hampstead. Their only daughter, Florence Mary was born in 1882. By April 1891, the family had moved to Hillfield Home, Knight Street, Sawbridgeworth near Bishop Stortford. Douglas William was born on 28th May 1891, being baptised in the parish church on 4th July. In 1907 Edward married Lucy Hemp, setting up home in Ladbroke Terrace, Notting Hill. And John married Millicent Fisher in 1908 remaining in Sawbridgeworth. During the next few years the family moved to Ealing. In 1911 the remaining family were living at 36 Madeley Road, Ealing and Douglas was employed as a Bank Clerk.

Douglas had enlisted by June 1915. It is difficult to be certain the battles in which Douglas saw action. Many regiments were moved from one battle area to another as the need arose and I haven’t yet found the Battalion War Diaries. Some battles started in one area and seemed to move to another. There were attacks ranging from High Wood to Delville Wood (each with their own battles) and along the Thiepval Ridge. One battle was around the village of Pozieres. It is likely that Douglas lost his life in one of the stages of this battle. The battle for Pozieres is described in some histories as an epic in its own right due to the heavy German defence. It was also recorded as being one of the costliest battles during that period in 1916. Pozieres and Thiepval were finally captured by Allied forces by the end of September.

Second Lieutenant **Douglas William Prout** was killed in action on Sunday, 3rd September 1916. His body was never recovered from the battlefield. His name is inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial (Pier 11D).

By 1922 William and Jessie were living at 34 West Lodge Avenue. William died in 1933, Jessie in 1938. Douglas’ brother Edward died in 1953 and John in 1957. Florence lived until 1960.



**Eric John Cecil Sear** (July 1893 – 8th September 1916)

He was the youngest son of Alfred and Emily Sear. Alfred was a Clerk in the Admiralty Office. Their first son, Duncombe was born in Clapham on 12th November 1891. Eric John Cecil was born in 1893, in Plymouth. His father, Alfred, died in Greenwich on 23rd April 1896. Emily and her two sons now relied on her family to help support them. In 1901 Emily and Eric were living with her sister and brother-in-law at 2 Waverley Place, St John’s Wood. Duncombe is not mentioned in this census. By 2nd April 1911, Emily had moved in with her mother at 2 Hillcroft Crescent, Ealing. Eric and Duncombe were also with her. Eric was employed as a Bank Clerk.

By 2nd May 1914 Eric had joined the Army. On this date he was aboard a ship on his way to India. He was in the Bombay Volunteer Rifles attached to the Indian Cavalry Division. During his service in India he became a Corporal. Army records show he was a motor cyclist. On 4th August 1914 Britain declared war on Germany. It seems Eric was transferred to the Welsh Regiment during 1915. By 1916 he was a Second Lieutenant. The Regiment was sent to the Western Front.

The 2nd Battalion Welsh Regiment War Diary records:

“*On September 8th the Battalion relieved the South Wales Borderers in HIGH WOOD and delivered an attack upon the enemy front line in the wood in conjunction with 1st Gloucesters who attacked on the left. The preliminary bombardment commenced at noon, and just before zero (6pm) the Special Brigade R.E. used flammenwerfers* [flamethrowers] *and a special type of oil-drum projectile which burst into flames in the enemy trench. B and C companies led the assault with D company in close support and A company reserve carrying company. An entry into the hostile trench was effected on the right and three platoons of B company and a part of D company occupied about 120 yards of enemy front line. C company and the left of B and D companies were held up by hostile machine-gun fire on the left. They made two unsuccessful attempts to get across and suffered heavy casualties. On each flank of the portions occupied on the right of the attack, a vigorous [*mortar*] bomb fight proceeded with varying success until about 3am, when, before a violent counter-attack our bombers, now very fatigued, were forced to retire. They fought tenaciously but only managed to retain a part of the communication trench which they had dug out to the trench they had taken. The 1st Gloucesters on the left were held up by hostile machine-gun fire excepting about 30 men led by their Commanding Officer and these were forced to retire almost immediately after gaining their objective.*

*The Battalion suffered the following casualties:*

*Capt Hayman and 21 other ranks killed.*

*Lieuts Brockington and White, 2nd Lieuts Price,* ***Sear*** *and Capt Turnbull and 43 other ranks missing.*

*Lieuts Dart, Walker, Herne, 2nd Lieuts Edwards, Knapp and 132 other ranks wounded. 2 other ranks died of their wounds.”*

Second Lieutenant **Eric John Cecil Sear** was killed in action on Friday 8th September and his body was never recovered from the battlefield. His name is inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial (Pier 7A & 10A).

By 1918 his mother, Emily, and his brother, Duncombe, were living at 8 West Lodge Avenue. Emily never remarried, eventually moving to 23 Arundel Street, Brighton. She died there on 7th May 1938. Duncombe served in the North Staffordshire (Prince of Wales’) Regiment, then in the Royal Flying Corps then its successor the Royal Air Force. He survived the war. He became a Merchant and sailed between Britain and Singapore on numerous occasions between 1919 and 1936. He married Louise Andrews in 1928. On the 3rd January 1957 they left Britain for the last time, retiring to Tasmania, Australia.



**Claude Hamilton Stainer** (April 1885 – 15th November 1916)

He was the youngest of two sons born to William and Ada Stainer. Their first son, William, was born in 1881 in Chatham, Kent. They were living on Portsea Island when their second son, Claude Hamilton, was born in April 1885. In 1891 the eldest son was in the Navy and the rest of the family were living at 7 Medway Road, Gillingham. By April 1901, the family was living at 14 Hereford Road, Portsmouth and William senior was a Staff Commander in the Royal Navy. By 1911 his father had retired and the family had settled at 22 Twyford Avenue. Claude was a dental student.

An unconfirmed source indicates he had travelled to South Africa either in March or early April 1915. What is confirmed is that on 21st April 1915, Claude arrived in Portsmouth from Algoa Bay (Port Elizabeth, now in South Africa) onboard RMS Saxon. The Passenger list records him as an Engineer. He started his Military career with the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps. Army records shows that from there he joined the East Surrey Regiment (6th Battalion) on 4th August 1916 as 2nd Lieutenant. In October 1916 the 6th Battalion East Surrey Regiment were sent home on Home Defence duty though many soldiers remained in France attached to other regiments. Claude was attached to the 10th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. Their War Diary records:

“*Mailly-Maillet*

*14/11/16. 1015pm. Orders have just been received for the Battalion to go and reinforce 5th Bedfords and ultimately relieve 6th Bedfords which did an attack this afternoon. At present the enemy are shelling this village – so far no damage.*

*15/11/16. This morning, 2am this Battn was ordered up to the front line trenches. At 8.30am the Battn was formed up in artillery formation and with the 51st Division on the right, and the 8th East Lancs on the left we advanced towards a German line known as the Munich Trench. Our own barrage was intense but very inaccurate causing a great many casualties. By 1pm today reports came in that we had failed to gain a footing in Munich Trench – our own barrage having killed and wounded so many of our men.*

*Amongst those killed were: Capt Chew, Lieuts Cooper & Jude, 2nd Lts Bennet,* ***Stainer*** *& Andrews.*

*Officers wounded were: 2nd Lts Howarth, Beastall, Bradbury, Baud & Macnamara.*

*Bradbury eventually succumbed to his wounds.”*

As well as the British barrage being so inaccurate, their artillery barrage had been so intense that no bodies could be recovered. Second Lieutenant **Claude Hamilton Stainer** was killed on Wednesday 15th November 1916. His body was never recovered from the battlefield and his name is inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial (Pier 6A & 6B).

His brother, William, was killed in a Naval accident in 1914. His father died in January 1922, his death recorded in the parish magazine. Claude’s medals were sent to his mother, Ada who, in February 1922 is recorded as living at 9 Matheson Road, West Kensington. She died in July 1935.



**William Gordon Stainer** (30th September 1881 – 26th November 1914)

He was the eldest of two sons born into a Naval family of William and Ada Stainer. In April 1881 they were lodging at 49 St John’s Road, Greenwich. Our William Gordon was born on 30th September 1881 in Chatham, Kent. They were living in Portsea when their second son, Claude, was born in 1885. In April 1891, our William was living with his grandparents in Clarendon Road, Portsea. The rest of the family were living at 7 Medway Road, Gillingham.

By April 1901, the family was living at 14 Hereford Road, Portsmouth and William senior was a Staff Commander. I cannot be certain when William Jnr joined the Navy. However, in 1901 records show he was serving on the battleship HMS Warspite in the Pacific Ocean; listed as a clerk. A 1902 Naval list records him as now being an Assistant Paymaster. It looks like he spent Christmas 1903 and saw in the New Year of 1904 in New York. On the 10th January 1904 he arrived in Liverpool on the SS Etruria from New York.

By 1911 the family had settled at 22 Twyford Avenue. The father was now retired Our William was now serving as Assistant Paymaster aboard the Royal Yacht “Victoria & Albert”. On April 2nd they were moored in the Inner harbour of Genoa. On June 19th, 1911 William was on duty at the Coronation of King George V. I could not determine whether he was part of the parade, or one of the servicemen lining the route. However, we know he took part in some way as he was awarded the 1911 Coronation Medal.

The London Gazette records William was appointed Paymaster on 9th September 1914. The Great War found him serving on HMS Bulwark. On a November morning in 1914, HMS Bulwark was anchored at Sheerness. While the ships company was at breakfast, an event occurred so tragic that Parliamentary business was interrupted. On the afternoon of Thursday November 26th 1914, Winston Churchill made the following statement to the House of Commons:

*"I regret to say I have some bad news for the house. The Bulwark battleship, which was lying in Sheerness this morning, blew up at 7.35 o'clock. The Vice and Rear Admiral, who were present, have reported their conviction that it was an internal magazine explosion which rent the ship asunder. ..... I regret to say the loss of life is very severe. Only 12 men are saved. All the officers and the rest of the crew, who, I suppose, amounted to between 700 and 800, have perished."*

HMS Bulwark, a battleship of 15,000 tons, was moored to No.17 buoy in Kethole Reach on the River Medway, almost opposite the town of Sheerness, Isle of Sheppey, Kent. It was one of the ships forming the 5th Battle Squadron. She had been moored there for some days, and many of her crew had been given leave the previous day. They had returned to the Bulwark at 7 o'clock that morning and the full complement was onboard. Suddenly a roaring and rumbling sound was heard and a huge sheet of flame and debris shot upwards. The ship lifted out of the water and fell back. There was a thick cloud of grey smoke and further explosions. When the smoke eventually cleared, HMS Bulwark had sunk without trace. The explosion was heard in Whitstable, 20 miles away, and in Southend where the pier was shaken by the explosion. Residents in Westcliffe-on-Sea claimed they saw "a dense volume of greenish smoke which lasted for about 10 minutes". The nearby areas of Sheerness and Rainham took the brunt of the blast. By Saturday November 28th only 30 bodies had been recovered and 14 could be identified by Cooks Mate William Cooper who was on sick leave on shore at the time of the explosion.

Paymaster **William Gordon** **Stainer** was one of those killed on Thursday, 26th November 1914. His body was never recovered. His name is inscribed on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial (Panel 1).

His brother, Claude, was killed in action in 1916. His father died in January 1922 and mother, Ada, died in July 1935.



**Ernest Theobald** (8th May 1889 – 1st September 1918)

He was the youngest of seven children, born on 8th May 1889 in Chatham, Kent. His parents, Henry and Sarah Theobald, were living at 42 Gibraltar Terrace in Chatham. Ernest’s siblings were Henry Jnr (born 1876), Sarah (born 1878), Lilian (born 1880), James (born 1882), Edith (born 1886) and Alice (born 1887). The family moved around quite a bit. In 1901 the census records they were living at 75 Cazenove Road, Hackney. However, in April 1911 most of the family were living at 42 Northfield Road, Stamford Hill, without Ernest.

Ernest emigrated to Canada in 1910. The Canadian census of 1911 records that he had become a Canadian national and was living in Manitoba, working as a farm labourer. The Attestation forms show that he signed up with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force on 19th September 1914. The documents state he was 5 feet 9½ inches tall with a chest measurement of 39 inches. He had Hazel eyes, fair hair and a scar above the left eye. His parents, listed as next of kin, were now living at 60 Creffield Road, Acton.

There is little information about his military career. His gravestone records that he had served in the Canadian Corps Military Police. This was not formed until 1917. This unit was formed as “Trench Police”. In the early years of the war trenches were given “street names”. Troops moved around and towards the front through this trench system. It became clear that when troops near the front moved around in this way they needed to know which direction they were to move. The “Trench Police” would move ahead of the infantry and at junctions direct the infantry units to their positions. In one of these actions he was killed. Corporal **Ernest Theobald** was killed in action on Sunday, 1st September 1918. He is buried in the Aubigney Communal Cemetery Extension (Grave IV.G.46).

Records show that in 1919 the family home was still 60 Creffield Road, although by 1926 his parents had moved to 9 Freeland Road, Ealing.



**Hugh John Upham** (1882 – 10th July 1917)

He was the third child Robert and Ellen Upham. His elder sisters were Nellie (born 1880) and Hilda (born 1881). His first home was 173 Prince of Wales Road, St Pancras. Hugh’s father was a Wood Carver by trade and by April 1891 the family had moved nearby to 189 Stanhope Street. The family must have been prospering as by 1901 they had moved to 11 King Henry’s Road, Hampstead. Hugh, however, had still kept in touch with a young lady from Stanhope Street. On 25th November 1905 Hugh married his sweetheart, Margaret King (born 1880) in Christ Church, St Pancras.

Hugh and Margaret started their married life living in a flat at 205 Wightman Road, North Hornsey. A housing Register of 1912 describes the flat as being “*3 rooms, front and back, first floor, unfurnished”.* Hugh was a Commercial Traveller selling “Wholesale Ironmongery”. By the autumn of 1915 Hugh and Margaret had moved into their own home at 42 Waldegrave Road, Hangar Lane.

He enlisted on 12th December 1915 and was mobilized on 23rd May 1916. He embarked from Southampton on 28th September, arriving at Le Havre the next day. Hugh was attached as a Gunner to the Royal Garrison Artillery on 16th October 1916. Army records show he was admitted to the General Hospital at Etaples on 28th February 1917. He was diagnosed as having Bronchitis. A month later, on 22nd March, he was discharged from hospital and returned to the 76th Siege Battery on 29 March 1917. The 76th Siege Battery seems to have been located west of Ypres with their Headquarters at Vlamertinge in Belgium. Army records have nothing more about Hugh until 10th July. There is no significant action recorded in that area until late July. We know that the Siege Battery was just within the German Artillery range.

The Army records pick up Hugh on Tuesday 10th July when they simply state: “*died of wounds 10.7.17 – 47 Fld Amb France*”. Gunner Hugh John Upham was buried nearby in the Hop Store Cemetery (Plot I, Row C, Grave 45).

Hugh’s wife had the following inscription engraved:

LOVE AND LOST FOR A WHILE

BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

BY HIS LOVING WIFE

His wife was awarded a War Pension, in 1919, of 13s 9d (65p) a week. She was sent his War Medal and Victory medal in 1922. Probate records show that Hugh left his wife £464 10s 7d.

In 1919 records show that his parents were living at 33 Whitehall Gardens. Of his sisters, the 1919 records also show that Nellie was living at 2 The Common, Ealing and Hilda (now Mrs Shattock) lived at 77 Lynton Road, Acton. His father died in 1929, his mother in 1935. The trail of Nellie stops there and Hilda died in 1967. Hugh’s wife, Margaret, never remarried. She continued to live at 42 Waldegrave Road until her death on 30th March 1956.



**Harold Victor Wageman** (14th November 1896 – 10th April 1917)

He was the youngest of three children of Thomas and Caroline Wageman who were married in St Dunstan’s Church, Acton. They started their married life at 4 Birkbeck Avenue, Acton. Harold’s elder sisters were Frances (born 1890) and Lucy (born 1893). Harold was born on 14th November 1896 and baptised in St Mary’s Church on 4th April 1897 by Revd Sausmarez. In the census of 1901 his father was recorded as being a Bank Inspector. By 1911 the family had moved to 48 Chatsworth Gardens.

Harold’s Army Attestation form tells us that he enlisted on 9th September 1914. It also tells us that at the time he was employed as a Bank Clerk at the LCM Bank, Marylebone. He had been a cadet with the 10th Middlesex. Harold was 6 feet tall with a chest measurement of 34 inches and a weight of 10 stone 5 pounds. He was attached to the 8th Middlesex (Reserves).



He embarked with his regiment from Southampton bound for Gibraltar on 1st February 1915. Harold was promoted to Lance Corporal on 27th February 1915 and to Corporal on 31st July. The regiment embarked from Gibraltar on 23rd August for Alexandria. It left Alexandria on 4th December 1915 as part of the Western Frontier Force supporting the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. In western Egypt there were several engagements and in one of these Harold in wounded. His story continues in “Matruh”. Mersa Matruh is an Egyptian port. On 4th March 1916 he is admitted to hospital because of a “diffused lacerated wound on face”. He is discharged on 9th March and rejoins his regiment. The regiment are in Alexandria on 8th May when they embark for Marseilles. They arrive in Marseilles on 15th May and are sent to Rouen, arriving in the city on 13th June 1916. Harold is taken ill on 24th June, being diagnosed with an “inflamed stomach” on 29th June. He is discharged from hospital on 2nd July and rejoins his unit on 2nd September in Etaples (near Boulogne). Harold was promoted to Sergeant on 19th September 1916.

I cannot be certain how he died. The War Diary section that does survive records that in April describe what history calls the “Arras Offensive”. This took place during April and May 1917. The entry in the Diary for 10th April says:

“*11am The Btn moved into position for the attack on Nepal Trench (Hindenburg Line).*

*12noon Advance started but was held up owing to enemy machine gun fire. B + D Coys advanced to within 200 yds of Nepal Trench where they were forced to dig in. A + C Coys were in support in trench about 200 yds behind. During this time there was much sniping and C Coy were shelled intermittently.*”

The Dairy goes on to say there were many casualties and some missing. Harold Wageman was one of those missing. The Army records continue with a list of the personal items that were returned to his parents. Only one part of the document can be read but the items included:

“*Safety Razor in case, Diary, Testament, Tob. Pouch, Pipe, Watch, 2 wristlets, Mirror, Scissors, Letters, Postcards, Photos in wallet.*”

This letter, to his parents’ solicitor, is dated 18th October 1917.

The Army records also contain a form signed by Harold’s father and witnessed by Revd Sausmarez on 26th May 1919. This form is to enable the death plaque to be sent to the next of kin. These forms were to confirm the next of kin and had to be witnessed by a Minister or Magistrate. Also on file are the signed receipts of his medals. The receipts were signed by his mother on 31st July 1920.

Sergeant **Harold Wageman** was killed in action on Tuesday 10th April 1917. His body was never recovered from the battlefield. His name is inscribed on the Arras Memorial (Bay7) in the Faubourg-d’Amiens Cemetery, France. Harold is also remembered on the War Memorial at the Territorial Army Drill Hall, Hanworth Road, Hounslow.

By 1940, his parents and sister, Lucy, had moved to 32 Grange Road, Ealing. His father died in 1940, his mother in 1951. His sister, Lucy, never married and died in 1953. Frances, his elder sister, married in 1918 and died in 1984.



**Walter Percy Woodstock** (27th October 1886 – 1st July 1916)

He was the first child of Walter and Victoria Woodstock. Walter Percy, born in 1886, was baptised in St Nicholas’ Church, Chiswick on 26th December that year. Henceforth, the family always called him Percy. The family lived in Marlborough Road, Chiswick. His sister, Winifred, was born in 1891 and his younger brother, Douglas was born in 1899. In the 1901 census Walter was recorded as a “scholar” at a boarding school in Bramley, Surrey. The family is now living at 11 Hillcrest Road, Acton.

The parish magazine records that “Mrs Woodstock has had to undergo a serious operation”. This entry in the December 1910 issue of the magazine is an indication of how the family was involved in the social aspect of St Martin’s Church. Not only was Victoria, it seems, central to a fund-raising event but Winifred was in charge of organizing a forthcoming entertainment. The 1911 census shows that Percy (Walter junior) was now an insurance clerk. The family were still living in Hillcrest Road.

Walter Percy enlisted in 1915 and joined the York and Lancaster Regiment. The early summer of 1916 found him on the Western Front. The end of June found the Battalion in the trenches in Authuille Wood. It is interesting to note that in the battle orders the Commanding Officer was told to remind all officers and men not to stop during the advance to collect trophies or souvenirs. “*This practice has in the past been found detrimental to the success of the operations”.* The Battalion War Diary continues:

“*1916: July 1st. Being the leading Batln on the left of the Brigade in the attack near Ovillers the Batln assaulted as per Orders. The attack was timed for 7.30am and for an hour previous to that hour the guns delivered an intense bombardment to which the enemy replied. . . . The first wave left our trenches in perfect order and to time and were at once met by an exceptionally heavy fire front and both flanks. Most of the men were killed or wounded but the remainder continued to advance. In spite of the heavy fire the remaining waves advanced to the attack but before getting halfway to the enemy trenches were mown down by the machine guns. About seventy men reached the enemy trenches some of these eventually reached the enemy’s third line of his front system of trenches where they remained fighting for some time before all were killed or taken prisoner – one returned. The remainder were held up in the enemy front line and considerable fighting took place here until almost all were killed – only 3 returned. . . . Our Batln as it went over the parapet numbered 680 NCOs and men and 23 officers. Of these only 68 men returned. All the officers were casualties 18 being killed or missing and 5 wounded.”*

Lieutenant **Walter Percy Woodstock** was killed on Saturday, July 1st. His body was never recovered from the battlefield and his name is inscribed on the Thiepval Memorial (Pier 14A & 14B).

In the mid 1920’s the parents moved to 30 Whitehall Gardens. His mother died in 1916, his father in 1933. His brother died in 1983 and his sister in 1988.



**Section 3**

**The Medals:**

The **1911 Coronation Medal** was awarded to all participants in the Coronation of King George V. This included those who played a part in the service, the procession or those lining the route. Two versions (civilian and military) were awarded. They can be distinguished only by the colour of the ribbon the medal was attached to.

The **1914 Star** is a bronze star and was authorised in April 1917. It was awarded to those who served in France or Belgium between 5th August and 22nd November 1914. The first date is the day after Britain’s declaration of war and the closing date is the end of the First Battle of Ypres. Recipients were those of the British Expeditionary Force and the men took part in the Retreat from Mons (hence many nicknamed it as the Mons Star – which is different from the Mons Rose). The design has two crossed swords and a scroll across them. The scroll has “Aug 1914 Nov” inscribed on it. The reverse of the Star would have the recipient’s number, rank and name.

The **1914-1915 Star** is identical to the 1914 Star with the exception that the centre scroll bears “1914-1915”. It was authorised in December 1918 and was awarded to men who saw service in any theatre of the war between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915. It was not awarded to men who were eligible for the 1914 Star.

The **British War Medal** was approved in July 1919. It was awarded to men who saw service between 5th August 1914 and 11th November 1918. To be eligible men had to have completed 28 days mobilised service. It was also awarded to men who died on active service whether or not they had completed 28 days.

The **Victory Medal** is a bronze medal awarded to all those who received the 1914 Star or the 1914-15 Star and to those who received the British War Medal. It was authorised in September 1919. The medal in its basic design was adopted by Belgium, Brazil, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Siam (Thailand), South Africa, and the U.S.A. The design has a form of an historic Greek monument (nations of the Far East which issued the medal with a different design). It was awarded to all those who were mobilized and served in any of the theatre of operations between 5th August 1914 and 11th November 1918. Women who served in any of the organizations in a theatre of operations were also eligible for this medal, such as nurses, canteen staff and members of charitable services.

The **Medal of St George, 4th class** is a Russian decoration. It was awarded for gallantry and “distinguished service” in the Field. It should not be confused with the “Order of St George” which was only awarded to those who served in Russia and on the Russian Front. The Medal was awarded to those who served in Belgium and France on the Western Front and distinguished themselves in action.

The **Military Cross** is a third level decoration awarded to officers. It is granted in recognition of “an act of exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy”. It was created in 1914 for commissioned officers of the rank of Captain or below.

**Mentioned in Despatches (M.I.D)** is the lowest form of recognition for a serviceman is not an award of a medal, but is a commendation of an act of gallantry or service. The soldier’s name would appear in the official report written by a Superior Officer and sent to the high command, in which is described the Soldier's gallant or meritorious action in the face of the enemy. This despatch is published in the London Gazette. The phrase “Mentioned in Despatches” was used for the first time in a newspaper article by Winston Churchill on 6th October 1898. During World War One the citations published in the London Gazette did not usually give details of the place and date of the action for which awarded for security reasons. In general no recommendations for Mention in Despatches survive for the army during WW1.

The Wound Stripe was first authorised in 1916: “The following distinctions in dress will be worn on the service dress jacket by all officers and soldiers who have been wounded in any of the campaigns since 4th August, 1914: Strips of gold Russia braid, No.1, two inches in length, sewn perpendicularly on the left sleeve of the jacket to mark each occasion on which wounded.” The term ‘wounded’ refers only to those officers and soldiers whose names have appeared in the Casualty Lists as ‘wounded’. Officers and men reported ‘wounded – gas,’ or ‘Wounded – shock, shell,’ are entitled to the distinction.



The Next of Kin **Memorial Plaque**, commonly called the ‘Death Plaque’, was issued to the next of kin of all those who died serving with the British and Empire Forces. It had the name of the person who died within a box. It was nicknamed the Death Penny by some as it resembled that coin. It was cast in bronze and issued with a scroll. They were sent out in 1919 and 1920 with a ‘King’s Message’. Those who died up to around 1921 were still eligible. Many next of kin did not receive the Plaque or Scroll if they had moved and could not be traced. In 1917 a competition was set up for the design, whch resulted in over 800 entries. The winning design was by Edward Carter Preston (1894-1965) and his initials can be found at the foot of the lion. The Plaques were produced in a Factory set up in 1918. It was situated at 54-56 Church Road, Acton and employed around 150 men. The premises were formerly the Acton Brewery and extended down to Avenue Road. It was officially listed as “Ministry of Munitions Memorial Plaque Factory”. 2,000 plaques a day was made at its peak production. In 1920 production was transferred to the Arsenal at Woolwich. At the time the local Council complained to the Government as it employed many ex-soldiers. The War Office sent members of the Unemployment Committee to Acton to consider local concerns. They considered the Acton output was too slow and there being more space at Woolwich recommended the closure of the Acton works. The contents were auctioned in September 1921.

The **Scroll** issued with the plaque contained a commemorative message below the Royal Crest with the rank, name and regiment of the person handwritten in calligraphic script. The message was written by Dr Montague Rhodes James, Provost of King's College Cambridge with a few changes.

**Headstones from World War 1**

If the identity of the soldier was unknown the headstone would be engraved with the words “A Soldier of the Great War”, followed by a cross and at the foot of the headstone: “Known unto God”

Where the soldier was known the headstone was engraved with his regimental badge, his rank and name, then a cross. The War Graves Commission invited next of kin to have limited additional words engraved at the foot of the headstone. Additional wording was charged at 3½d per letter. Additional wording has been included where when chosen by the next of kin.